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FIELD HOUSE.

SISTER DORA.

Sister Dora.

Engraved by C. H. Jeens from a photograph by Mr. Williams of Wolverhampton.

SISTER DORA.

A BIOGRAPHY.

FIELD HOUS

BY

MARGARET LONSDALE.

"A sweete attractive kind of grace,
A full assurance given by lookes
Continuall comfort in a face,
The lineaments of Gospel bookes."

SPENSER.

FOURTH EDITION.

LONDON:
C. KEGAN PAUL & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.
1880.

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

"It is a very hard thing, I suppose," says Dr. Arnold, "to read" (either a book or a character) "at once passionately and critically; by no means to be cold, captious, sneering, or scoffing; to admire greatness and goodness with an intense love and veneration, yet to judge all things, to be the slave neither of names nor of parties, and to sacrifice even the most beautiful associations for the sake of truth." Yet this is the duty of a biographer, and I have tried, however unsuccessfully, to fulfil it, and thus to aim at presenting a faithful portrait to my readers.

The engraving which stands as a frontispiece to this book is, I am sorry to say, a failure in some important respects. It was executed under unfortunate circumstances. Mr. Jeens was seriously ill when he undertook it, and he was never able to work at it at all with his own hand.

Hence, although it will give some idea to those who did not know Dorothy Pattison, of the regularity of form for which her features were remarkable, it has not even a trace of that subtle and beautiful expression by which her friends chiefly remember her face, or of the youthful softness and roundness which she never lost.

There is little doubt, I think, judging by Mr. Jeens' other works, that he would have been able to give to the engraving the spirit and life in which it is now wholly wanting, and of which the original photograph has a certain portion.

I am aware that many stories are told about Sister Dora, both in Walsall and elsewhere, possessing an element of the marvellous, nay, of the supernatural, which would have made her biography sensational, as well as more interesting. But as I never heard one of these stories from her own lips, and as they seem to me altogether to lack the reasonable confirmation of sober-minded persons, I prefer to avoid the controversy to which, if they were told as facts, they would inevitably give rise.

Although the power to work miracles, once given to faithful men, seems to have been lost, perhaps because no one faithful enough to wield it is ever

found, there are still "more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy," and I dare not use the word "impossible" with regard to the "visions" which some people suppose Sister Dora to have seen, and the supernatural communications which they affirm were made to her.

But I incline rather to the belief that such ideas about her had a very simple and natural origin, in the veneration in which her great powers were justly held, by the ignorant and superstitious, as well as by the credulous among the educated, who easily persuaded themselves that what she achieved was due rather to supernatural agency, than to a singular combination of genius and self-devotion.

I desire heartily to thank all my friends, gentle and simple, too numerous to be here mentioned by name, for the kind sympathy and ready help they have given me, by granting me interviews, lending me letters, and sending contributions to this memoir, without which it could never have been put together.

M. L.

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

In this edition the letters from Mr. Willett and from Monsignor Capel (one of which was published in the first, and both in the second and third editions of this book), relating to the report that Sister Dora had become a proselyte to another communion, are altogether omitted. I found that Mr. Willett's letter was likely to give rise to a controversy into which I had no desire to enter; the fact, in proof of which it was originally inserted, has been otherwise stated, as may be seen at page 236.

I have omitted the story of the post-mortem examination on a man whose head had been injured, and the excited fury of the Irish mob. The truth of this story has been called in question. It ought to be scarcely necessary to say that it is true in every particular, so far as I am able to judge; that I wrote it as nearly as possible in Sister Dora's own words, spoken to myself, merely

leaving out some ghastly and unnecessary details; and that I know at least three other persons, besides myself, to whom she related it exactly in the same terms. I do not therefore omit the story because it is untrue, or because it may be a shock to the feelings of sensitive people to learn that Sister Dora, from whom surgery, and not merely nursing, was required, gained a great part of her knowledge and skill by dissecting whenever she had the opportunity. But it has been pointed out to me, and I think with reason, that it is undesirable in any way to aggravate the prejudice, which already exists in the minds of ignorant and foolish people, against this inevitable accompaniment of hospitals and surgery. These objectors are ready to profit by the results of such practices, although they cannot bear to realize the methods by which those results have been obtained.

I am sorry to find that I have, most unintentionally, wounded the susceptibilities of the inhabitants of Walsall. I may just say that, I think, for once their naturally clear vision must be obscured by some clouds of their own unconsumed smoke, or they would hardly fail to perceive that they have unnecessarily fitted on a cap which does not entirely belong to them; for that my descriptions refer to the whole of the district called "the Black Country," and not to Walsall alone.

It seems desirable to state that I knew as a fact

when I undertook to write Sister Dora's life, that I was not doing anything to which she would have objected. She said to two friends, some years ago, "Some time, if ever I have any leisure, I should like to write a history of my adventures and experiences;" and two of her lady-pupils did, with her knowledge and approval, write for publication some short accounts of her and her work.

If any further justification for the book be needed I add, that such a life as that of Sister Dora ought to be considered public property; and with all the more reason, because she spent her days in the comparative obscurity of a provincial town, where her memory might otherwise be speedily buried. Her biography has not been written to please the Walsall people, nor is her memory private property; and, in the words of one of her own pupils, I may say, "They have been for a long time in the too exclusive enjoyment of a treasure;" and now others must be allowed to have a share in it.

M. L.

January 31, 1880.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Childhood and Early Life: 1832–1852 ...	1
II.	Life at Little Woolston, Coatham, and Walsall: 1861–1867	14
III.	Hospital Life and Visit to Lichfield: 1867–1870	48
IV.	The Work of the Hospital: 1870–1873 ...	93
V.	First Mission at Walsall and Small-pox Epidemic: 1873–1875	115
VI.	Life in the Epidemic Hospital: 1875	140
VII.	Life at Walsall Hospital and Second Mission: 1875–1876	165
VIII.	Life in the Temporary Hospital. Sister Dora leaves Walsall: 1876–1878	194
IX.	Visits to Paris and London. Increasing Illness and Return to Walsall: 1878	214
X.	Last Days and Death: 1878	230
XI.	Funeral: 1878	240

SISTER DORA.

CHAPTER I.

CHILDHOOD AND EARLY LIFE: 1832–1852.

"In a far village, little known,
She dwelt."

DOROTHY WYNDLOW PATTISON was born at the village of Hauxwell, near Richmond, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, on January 16th, 1832. Her father, the Rev. Mark James Pattison, for many years rector of Hauxwell, belonged to a Devonshire family. Her mother, whose name was Winn, was of Yorkshire descent, being the daughter of a banker at Richmond, who had property in the place. Dorothy was the youngest but one of Mr. and Mrs. Pattison's twelve children, the eldest and the youngest of the family being sons, the rest daughters. Dorothy inherited beauty of feature from her mother, and from her father a well-proportioned figure and fine bearing.

No account of her early days can be complete without some description of the country where she was born and brought up, and which evidently exercised upon her character a marked influence throughout her life. Hauxwell is a tiny village lying on the southern slope of a hill, from whence an extensive view of the moors and Wensleydale is obtained. It contains between two and three hundred inhabitants. The rectory is a pretty little dwelling, some half-mile from the church, which is a fine old building much shut in by trees. The whole village, even on a bright summer day, gives the traveller an impression of intense quiet, if not of dulness: but in the winter, when the snow lies thickly for weeks together in the narrow lane, the only thoroughfare of the place; when the distant moors also look cold in their garment of white, and the large expanse of sky is covered with leaden-coloured clouds; when the very streams with which the country abounds are frozen into silence,—then indeed may Hauxwell be called a lonely village.

Very little can be discovered in the history of Dorothy Pattison's early days which in any way tends to explain her after life. She was a very delicate child, and the pet and darling of her elder sisters, through whose constant care she outlived many serious attacks of illness during her infancy and childhood. In spite of continual ailments, she early showed the sweetness and evenness

of temper which distinguished her in after life, added to a spirit of fun and mischief which seemed at times almost to possess her. She was not allowed, on account of her health, to "do lessons" regularly like other children; but she showed an aptitude for learning without being taught, and for picking up crumbs of information, which she digested rapidly in her vigorous little mind. "She learnt as if by instinct, and gathered experience and judgment from everyday life," says one of her sisters.

She began in early childhood her habit of minute observation, and of storing up in her brain what she saw and heard, from which she drew, sometimes a right, sometimes a wrong, but never an idle inference. Perhaps her life among the moors may have had something to do with the early development of this power; for the dwellers upon wide, trackless country, be it moorland or mountain, are unconsciously trained to observe the smallest indications of a path, often no more than mere sticks or stones, or a strange-looking bush, or tree stunted by the bleak moorland wind; but above all do they study the signs of the sky, showing the speedy approach of storms, almost unnoticed by dwellers in a city or thickly wooded country.

Dorothy gained the character of a quiet, collected child, mainly because she was not strong enough to follow her natural inclination always to exert her

bodily as well as her mental powers; and thus she grew accustomed, when almost a baby, to exercise her mind, although she was delighted, whenever she felt strong enough, to rush about the house after her sisters, and not only to join in, but to originate, schemes for fun and mischief. The life of the Pattison family was so entirely uneventful, that it might have been dull but for the energy and imagination displayed by the younger members in finding amusement and occupation for themselves. Dorothy's quiet determination to have her own way began to show itself, as such qualities always must, while she was very young; she displayed, however, no violent wilfulness, and her disposition and temperament were eminently lovable and unselfish. If she could not get her own way easily, she did not give it up, or take refuge in sulks, or in an outbreak of temper, like most children; rather, the meeting with opposition seemed to stimulate her active mind to find a device for getting her way somehow.

Here is one of her own stories to illustrate this. She and her next sister had what they were pleased to consider extremely ugly velvet bonnets for Sunday wear. Complaints, however, were useless; and, as usual, Dorothy's brains were set to work to accomplish her end. One very rainy day the children knew that Mrs. Pattison was gone out for a long drive: Dorothy ran to her sister and said,

"Be quick; now's our chance for spoiling our bonnets!"

They fetched the obnoxious articles and put them on, threw open the library window, stuck their heads well out, and let the rain work its worst upon the velvet. Then, at Dora's suggestion, and not at all with a view of hiding what they had done, but merely to complete the operation, they put the bonnets away, soaking wet as they were, into their boxes. Sunday morning came: where were the bonnets? Dora replied firmly, "Quite spoilt; we can never wear them any more." They were condemned, however, to wear them; and not on that Sunday alone, but for many Sundays afterwards, they appeared in church with the monuments of failure upon their heads.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Pattison kept their children in good order, insisting upon strict obedience; and although Dorothy was petted on account of her ill health, and almost idolized by her sisters, she was not spoilt. When she was about fourteen she had the most serious of all her illnesses, accompanied with terrible spasms, which caused her much suffering, and lasted for some months. She seemed then to develop the power, which must have been quietly growing in her, of extraordinary fortitude in bearing pain and weariness, combined with an aptitude for always looking on the bright side of everything, a habit which never forsook her through

life. After this illness her health began to improve, and she was able again to take her part in the family life.

There is no evidence that at this time she showed any special interest in sick persons. The whole family were devoted to the care of the people in the village, the sisters walking out, two together, carrying little cans containing soup or food for those who wanted it. Nor did Dorothy in any way distinguish herself more than the others in parish work, which, be it remembered, was not in those days organized as it is now. Mrs. Pattison's family had established for many generations a reputation for open-handedness and liberality, and these qualities were inherited in no common degree by all the children, but especially by Dorothy. Not merely charity, but hospitality to the poor as well as to the rich, was their habit through life. Comforts abounded in their home; but these seem chiefly to have been valued because they furnished the means of bringing happiness into the lives of others. The girls were always planning how to save their money to give it away, and they made a rule of carefully mending and remaking their old clothes, in order that they might not have to buy new ones—their mother rightly requiring that they should be neatly and properly dressed. Giving away their dinners, and dining on bread and cheese themselves, seems to have

been an ordinary occurrence. It could not, of course, have been necessary, but they chose to do it because it was no pleasure to them to give away to others what cost them nothing. In fact, giving to others, instead of spending on themselves, seems to have been the rule and delight of their lives; for not only did they liberally bestow money, but time, instruction, powers of mind and body, and above all, love and pity to those around them; and they reaped the sure reward in the devotion of the people to them and their interests.

And in this devotion of herself to others, Dorothy was in no wise behind the rest of the family, as the following anecdote testifies. While she was travelling abroad, a schoolboy in the village, who was specially attached to her, fell ill of rheumatic fever. The boy's one longing was to see "Miss Dora" again, and as he grew worse and worse, and still she did not come home, he constantly prayed that he might live to see her. On the day on which she was expected he sat up on his pillows intently listening, and at last, long before any one else could hear a sound of wheels, he exclaimed, "There she is! there's Miss Dora!" and sank back. She went to him at once, and stayed with him, nursing him till he died. This seems to be the only instance of her having shown in early youth any aptitude for nursing sick people, and this was rather the outpouring of the spirit of helpfulness

towards others, particularly towards those whom she loved, than any special taste for nursing itself.

One work, however, in which she highly distinguished herself at this time was the care of the village choir, which she brought into excellent order, and kept together with ability. She had herself, like most people from the Yorkshire moorlands, a love for music, and a clear and powerful voice, with that peculiar roundness and richness of sound about it only to be heard in the favoured district where every boy and girl seems to be born singing.

As Dorothy's health grew stronger, she became very fond of riding. She was a good and daring horsewoman, and both her physical and mental powers were strengthened and developed by active exercise in the open air; and thus she cultivated what was well termed by one of her sisters "that independence of character and ready decision in action which afterwards highly distinguished her." She was always riding across country, and loved, as every Yorkshire man or woman loves, to follow the hounds; going to the meets with her brothers, and knowing uncommonly well how to keep up with the field. Many a time in after years has she delighted the hearts of her patients by stories of her rides across the wild Yorkshire moorlands, firing especially the imagination of the big boys, who, with their ready admiration for display of

physical courage, were irresistibly fascinated by a woman in whom they saw combined resolution of body and mind.

Next to riding, she liked nothing so well as driving herself about in a pony carriage, and up to the last summer of her life she enjoyed spending a short holiday with her brother-in-law and driving on her native moors. Nothing could exceed her activity in all kinds of outdoor exercise, such as running, jumping, and playing games: and she entered into anything of the nature of a hunt, whether of fox, hare, or rat, with the zest and vigour of a boy.

By the time she was twenty years old Dora, as she now liked to be called, had lost every sign of delicacy, and had become a tall, strong, healthy woman, vigorous both at work and play, and with a restless energy which would not be satisfied with inaction of body or mind for one single moment. She had an everlasting flow of animal spirits, bubbling over in fun, and a keen sense of the humorous side of things in general, and of human nature in particular, which she sought to gratify by every means in her power.

A neighbour writes thus of her early life: "Her merry laugh still rings in my ears;" and another friend says: "I have known nothing of Dora for many years, but always think of her as the bright, bonnie maiden singing about the house." Although

her education had been necessarily very intermittent, her intelligence seemed to supply whatever might be wanting. An atmosphere of cultivation pervaded the house, and whatever she was doing, she was always thinking; and everything new and old became for her matter of close meditation and consideration.

The world, of which she knew practically nothing at all, was a subject on which she exercised her vivid imagination; and her future life, and what she should do with it, were constantly uppermost in her mind. What direct education she had must have been, in those days, more like that of a boy than of a girl; and in later years she often lamented that hard work had left her no time to keep up her knowledge. Indirectly she learnt a great deal from her sisters, and still more from her elder brother, Mr. Mark Pattison, of Lincoln College, Oxford, who employed her occasionally to copy for him, and at whose dictation she used to write.

Those who knew her at this time of her life say that her personal beauty was very remarkable. She was tall and slender, about five feet seven inches in height, and perfectly well made: to her figure the word "fine" must be applied, because no other word so aptly describes it. Her hands were small and beautifully formed; no amount of hard work could destroy their symmetry, although it could and did leave upon them traces which were

unmistakable, and of which she was extremely proud. She would say laughingly sometimes in later life, "I cannot wear sevens just now, I have been doing such hard work." Her features were nearly perfect in their regularity, the forehead singularly wide and high, with a peculiar formation of the head, of which a surgeon once remarked that he should have taken it in any one else to indicate a tendency which had been overcome to water on the brain, but that he knew in her case it meant only remarkable mental qualities. Her mouth, which when shut was small, with full red lips, opened rather widely when she spoke or laughed, and showed to the day of her death a perfect row of white teeth. In the corners of it there always lurked an expression of fun, with which her not large but very brilliant dark-brown eyes, set widely apart, twinkled their merry sympathy. Perhaps later on in life the powerful form of her chin and jaw, reminding people of Dante's profile, became too marked for beauty; at the age of twenty, however, the dark, tightly curling brown hair, waving all over her head, which no amount of cutting off or covering with caps could ever smooth, the softness and roundness of youth, the extreme beauty and delicacy of her whole colouring and complexion, added to the liveliness of her expression, made her a fascinating creature to look upon. She was popular with all classes in her own village and

neighbourhood, possessing that most justly winning of gifts, a courteous and naturally sympathetic manner and mode of address, with a ready flow of words.

It is not wonderful that this combination of personal and mental graces should have made her highly attractive, and eminently fitted to shine in society, for which she had a natural inclination. One of her characteristics was an intense love of amusement, and of getting fun out of everything; and this she conveyed in no mean degree to others, through the medium of her own ready wit and originality of expression. She had a large share of practical common sense, with a good deal of the shrewdness inseparable from the Yorkshire character, and possessed the faculty for hitting the right nail on the head, and for seeing to the bottom of a well. But the strongest of all her natural inclinations was the love of giving and of helping others; spending and being spent for them was a delight to her, and it seemed as if she could derive no real happiness from anything which did not involve a sacrifice of herself in some way or other.

It will be said that a perfect character, with human sympathies indeed, but with no human failings, is here described; but there will be found in the history of Dorothy Pattison's laborious life, together with the gradual development of her

vigorous and healthy moral nature, her vivid imagination and power of realizing things unseen and immortal, the record also of human weaknesses and infirmities not few or small, of struggles and grapplings with moral disease and temptation in some of their most dangerous forms,—battles in which she by no means always came off victorious, and of some of which she bore the scars to her death-bed.

Her indomitable will, which no earthly power could subdue or master, though it was one of her greatest gifts, and enabled her to accomplish an almost superhuman work, yet became to her, on several occasions, the cause of her greatest difficulties.

Her strong power of personal influence—that subtle, many-sided, most doubtful of blessings to the possessor—was not without its snares for her; and were any illustration needed to prove that signal gifts, whether physical, mental, or moral, bring with them such heavy responsibilities that they must have their counterbalancing disadvantages, that illustration would be furnished by the life of Dorothy Pattison.

CHAPTER II.

LIFE AT LITTLE WOOLSTON, COATHAM, AND WALSALL: 1861–1867.

"But then, you see, she was a real princess."

AFTER Dora had reached the age of twenty, there were yet nine years which she passed, to all outward appearance, quietly at home. But it was not in her nature to be passive and take life as it came; she was always burning to exercise her physical powers in some vigorous pursuit. A wild country life, in which there must always be an element of monotony, if not of stagnation, could not satisfy her. Her enthusiasm and spirit of adventure were roused by Miss Nightingale's work during the Crimean War. She wanted to join the band of women who went out as nurses, and implored her father to let her go. He wisely refused, telling her that, untrained and undisciplined as she was, she would be worse than useless, adding that she had enough to employ her at home, if she would only think so. Outwardly Dorothy acquiesced, but she seems to have been inwardly restless under her

disappointment. Her craving, however, for work in the world, in a corner of which she seemed condemned to sit apart from the busy crowd, did not interfere with her duty to her parents. Her mother was a great invalid, and Dorothy, with her next sister, did most of the nursing which she required. Dora's never-failing spirits made her the life of the house; her father called her his "sunshine," and she was considered good company by both her brothers. She spent several long vacations with the elder of them, helping him with the mechanical part of his work, and no doubt receiving in return large benefit from her intercourse with the refined and cultivated intellect of a man much older than herself.

Her too vivid imagination was, at this time of her life, cultivated at the expense of more useful though less brilliant qualities. Partly her natural turn of mind, and partly her bringing up in a country where superstitions and old wives' tales abound, made her peculiarly susceptible of whatever appealed to her strong faith in the supernatural, and she was wont, at all times of her life, to indulge in presentiments, and to believe in them as warnings. During one of her visits to her brother, she had a dream in which her mother appeared to her, drawing back the curtain of the bed and calling, "Dora, Dora, Dora!" The dream was so vivid, and the impression which it left was so strong, that the next morning she told her old

servant about it, but forbore to tell her brother, for fear he should say, as usual, "Oh, it is only one of your silly north-country superstitions."

No letter came that day from Hauxwell. This increased Dora's anxiety, and when the same dream returned the next night, her mother calling her as before, and looking very worn and ill, Dora could no longer refrain from telling her brother that she was certain their mother was in danger and wanted her. He tried in vain to laugh her out of her intention of sending for letters to the neighbouring town; nothing else would satisfy her, and a letter, which had been delayed three days, was found containing the news of Mrs. Pattison's dangerous illness. Dora went at once, and found her mother laid on her death-bed. She died soon afterwards. Thus her main occupation at home was taken from her; and other circumstances not in any way connected with her family, and which need not have place in this memoir, conspired to increase her longing for an actively useful life.

In some of her visits to Redcar, she had become acquainted with certain members of a large working Sisterhood, calling themselves the Good Samaritans. Their head-quarters were at Coatham, near Redcar, in Yorkshire, where they also kept a Convalescent Home, and they were engaged in various other works of mercy in different parts of England. Dora's slight knowledge of the world and its ways, and

her desire for real hard work, led her to think that these Sisters, labouring for the good of others, were much to be envied. Her quiet life at home became more and more distasteful to her, and her restlessness was uncontrollable. Mr. Pattison did not approve of Dora leaving her home for such a purpose, and did all in his power to prevent it, short of absolutely laying upon her his commands, which at her age he would hardly, perhaps, have felt justified in doing. Her wilfulness was strong, and now first began to assert itself in a way which she repented bitterly in her after life, and for which no reparation could ever be made. "I was very wilful, I did very wrong; let no one take me for an example," were her own words on her death-bed, when she was speaking about this part of her behaviour towards her father. He did not, however, perhaps he would not, altogether oppose her desire to go and work somewhere, at something.

The end of it was, that in October, 1861, Dora Pattison finally left her home, and became nominally village schoolmistress in the parish of Little Woolston, near Bletchley, on the borders of Buckinghamshire. Her father told her that he should merely give her the allowance she had always had, and this, added to the schoolmistress's salary, probably small enough, was all which she had to live upon. She had always a distaste for a life of luxury, and now she was to prove how she

would encounter, certainly a life of privation, probably one of hardship and humiliation. She appears, however, to have spent three years at Woolston happily enough. Whatever may have been her inward struggles, she let no one discover them, and she left behind her a good name as a painstaking and energetic schoolmistress. She lived alone in a tiny cottage, keeping no servant, and only employing an old woman now and then to do the hardest scrubbing.

At first, of course, she was merely a schoolmistress. She soon became known, both in the village and the neighbourhood, as a lady by birth and education. Her beauty, highly-bred appearance, and courteous manners, won for her the same respect and admiration which the Yorkshire people entertained for her. But at Little Woolston her natural talents and power of influencing others began to have their due weight. She had gone thither with no prestige whatsoever, her antecedents were unknown; she had merely answered the clergyman's advertisement for a *lady* to take the post of schoolmistress in his parish.

In her devotion to children, especially to the very little ones, her fitness for the task was amply proved. She possessed, to an uncommon degree, the power of putting herself in their place, of seeing with their eyes and hearing with their ears; she was a child herself, in her love of simple pleasures,

in her delight in animals, flowers, a sunshiny day, a roll in a haycock, or a game of play of any kind. She not only taught her children at school, but she followed them to their homes, nursed them when they were sick, and visited their parents, and others also of the poor and sick in the village. She was good at telling the interminable stories in which children delight; and it was at Little Woolston, no doubt, that she learnt the dexterous management of children of all ages, their tempers and dispositions—an art which in after life she turned to good account in the wards of a hospital.

Dora's loneliness in her cottage must have been at times hard to bear, and besides this, she had an adventure of an unpleasant kind with a burglar. One day, when she happened to be at home, an ill-looking man came to beg, and she noticed that he took an observant look round her little kitchen. That evening she went to sit up with a man in the village who was dangerously ill. He died in the course of the night, and as she returned home through the fields, between one and two o'clock, she saw a bright light burning in her kitchen. She unlocked the door just in time to recognize the same man who had begged of her in the daytime, and to see him making his escape through the window of the adjoining room with all her small collection of silver spoons and forks which she had brought from home, and a teapot which she specially

valued. She never discovered any trace either of the thief or of her property.

The people in the neighbourhood were astonished to find Miss Pattison blacking her grate when they came to see her, but it never seems for a moment to have entered the heads of the poorest that she was not every inch a lady. Rather they tried, by every means in their power, to show that they knew her for "a real princess." An old gentleman and his wife, near the village, took such a fancy to her, that they did their best to persuade her to give up her work, and to live with them. They had no children, and the gentleman offered to make her his heiress. For some time after Dora left Little Woolston, he used to send her ten pounds regularly every year to do as she pleased with, on condition that she should not acknowledge the gift. Nevertheless, she always acknowledged it, and gave it away, as she already did every sixpence which she could by any possibility spare out of her income, and in consequence he ceased after some time to send it.

Whether Dora overworked herself in her school, or whether the constant, almost morbid feeling of restlessness that she had in her mind, "I am not doing my utmost; I should have more time, more opportunities for doing good and in a better way, if I went into that Sisterhood," oppressed her, it is difficult to discover. Her health seems to have suffered, and a very bad cold, which, as was her

wont with most of her ailments, she neglected, took severe hold on her. She went on with her daily toil and her night nursing, regardless of pain in her side. The clergyman, who, like the rest of the world, was apt to make the willing horse work, exhorted her "not to give way." Nor did she stop, until she found one morning that she positively could not get out of bed. The doctor pronounced that she had a severe attack of pleurisy, and when fit to be moved she was sent to Redcar to recover. The associations of that place revived in her the old longing for regular work and training; and her resolution was taken. She only went back to Little Woolston to take leave of her friends there; and then, in the autumn of 1864, she became attached to the Sisterhood of the Good Samaritans. Her father neither gave nor withheld his consent, but Dorothy knew, only too well, that none of her family approved of what she had done.

Those who knew her best must have been painfully aware that she was specially unfitted for a Sisterhood life, that she had sympathies and longings which might be fatally repressed in such an atmosphere, and that her intellectual gifts might either be neglected, or become a snare to her, when she no longer had the opportunity of measuring herself with her equals. She was as popular among the members of the Sisterhood with whom she came in contact, as she had been at Little Woolston,

although she was at no pains to conceal, at any time of her life, that she disliked the sole company of women, and despised almost equally their understanding and their limited and uncultivated physical powers. She had the "pride of life" strong within her, and the keen sense of humour which was apparent enough in her disposition at the age of twenty, was only intensified as she grew older. But there had also been growing in her, silently and secretly, a spirit which urged her on irresistibly to work, not merely for work's sake, but for the satisfaction of a craving which nothing else could repress, and which she vainly hoped in this way to stifle if not to conquer.

Dora had been brought up in the faith which the members of the Church of England profess, and as she grew, the desire to express in her life the reality and personal nature of that faith grew with her. But before she went to Woolston, she fell under the influence of an intellect more powerful than her own, and the result of her contact with it was a shock to the very foundations of her religious faith. The difficulties which assailed a mind such as hers were of the intellectual, not of the imaginative order. She had no difficulty in realizing the existence of supernatural agencies; on the contrary, she was always sensible that they were at work within and around her. Miracles presented no stumbling-block to her; she affirmed

that everything was more or less wonderful and incomprehensible to her. But her mind was filled with doubts relating to the authenticity and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, so that she could not give herself up to that personal devotion to Christ, without which her nature could not rest satisfied.

The Sisterhood of the Good Samaritans was one of those communities which are called "secular;" a term meant to express that the members of it are not contemplative, but active, and that they take no vows either openly or secretly, excepting the vow of obedience to the clergyman who calls himself their "pastor," and to the person whom he may appoint out of their number to the office of "Sister in Charge," commonly called "Mother Superior." "Sister Dora," as Miss Pattison now became, was put through a severe course of training which was as distasteful to her as anything in the shape of work could possibly be. She made beds, cleaned and scoured floors and grates, swept and dusted, and finally became a cook in the kitchen at Coatham. At first, she literally sat down and cried when the beds that she had just put in order were all pulled to pieces again by some superior authority, who did not approve of the method in which they were made. Sister Dora, already aching in every limb from the unaccustomed strain upon her muscles, had to pick up the bedclothes from the floor, where they had been thrown, and begin her toil over again.

Her own comment upon this kind of training always was, "It *was* good for me." But it was hardly what she had expected. Little did she foresee what a difference, in more important respects than ease and luxury, there would be between a Sister's life and that of a young lady who might always go pretty much her own way. Her taste for nursing, which she had been able to gratify in a desultory manner only at Little Woolston, was cultivated first in the small Cottage Hospital at North Ormesby, near Middlesborough, where she worked sometimes alone, sometimes with other Sisters who were in charge.

Several letters, written to one of her friends at Little Woolston soon after her settlement at North Ormesby, show that she had left some of her heart behind her, in the place where she had worked for three years.

"*The Hospital, North Ormesby, Jan. 5th,* 1865.

"My dear Miss F——,

"Thank you for your kind letter, and for all the news which it contained. I was sorry to send my envelope without a line, but I was so occupied. I am so sorry to hear about Miss L—— being so ill. If it should please God to raise her up again, she must come to you to see what Woolston air and your kind nursing will do. . . . I am afraid, from what you say, that you never received

a letter of mine written when I was ill, or just before—I forget which—I caught the scarlet fever. If you could see me now you would not know me. I am blooming. I have bathed every morning in sea-water, and got a famous blow on the shore every day, but alas! I have been ordered off to the hospital to-day, and am sitting up to-night with a poor man who is suffering from concussion of the brain; and he alarms me by getting up and trying to get away, and he is insensible (*i.e.* not himself), so that it is useless speaking to him. It is so cold at night that, though sitting over the fire, I am shivering. I have put a blister on my patient. I hope, when it takes effect, there will be an improvement. I hope he won't die, for I am the only Sister here; the others have gone for their holiday. Is Hannah still at home? Tell W—— I often think of her, and hope that she will be a better girl this year, and not give you so much trouble. Does she keep her hair tidier? Give Miss L—— my love; remember me to Mrs. S—— when you see her. With kind love to yourself, and kind regards to your mother,

"I remain, yours sincerely,

"Dora Pattison."

She used to say of herself, and not without reason, "Oh, I always catch everything that's going." This scarlet-fever illness was the first of

many others, for although she was strong, she was specially susceptible of infection. In another letter, written also in January, 1865, to her Woolston friend, Miss F——, after begging earnestly for news and letters, and inquiring anxiously about the new schoolmistress, and how the work of teaching was being conducted, she says, "Thank God, I keep well and strong, and happy in my work." She was soon moved from this hospital back to the Convalescent Home, where the work was not so congenial to her.

In the early part of 1865, Sister Dora was sent to Walsall to help in the nursing at a small cottage hospital, which had already been established there for rather more than a year, and of which the Good Samaritan Sisterhood had taken charge. Walsall, which then contained about 35,000 inhabitants, is a town lying on the borders of that great coal and iron district in South Staffordshire called by the expressive name of "the Black Country."

This tract of land, before it was disfigured by unnatural excrescences and upheavings of the soil, and defiled by smoke, must have been very beautiful. It was well wooded and watered, as the names of some of the districts still testify. At the present day the woods have been cut down, to make room for forests of tall chimneys of every variety of shape, which vomit forth volumes of smoke and fierce tongues of flame; the streams have been turned out

of their courses, and have been not only polluted for many purposes, but converted into rivers of steaming hot water. Rows of dusky little red-brick houses, begrimed inside as well as out with dirt, are to be seen there crowded with men, women, and swarms of blackened children, to whom the sight of green grass, or of a tree not stunted or stained by the grimy atmosphere, is well-nigh unknown. Yet this country, and particularly the town of Walsall, has a peculiar picturesqueness of its own, just as the people possess a singular and very marked character unknown except in the mining and manufacturing districts. The smoke gives a haziness and a look of distance to the atmosphere, and this imparts a peculiar effect both to sky and clouds. At sunrise and sunset, strange and often beautiful forms, made up of huge cranes and other machinery, stand out against the horizon; while dirty canals, glorified by indistinctness, are crowded by gaily painted barges, producing a general effect which is often very picturesque. At night the whole scene changes, and the spectator seems to be transported into the infernal regions, where the blinding glare of blast furnaces, the snorting of engines, the ponderous thud of steam-hammers, and the clang and whiz and whir of machinery, sounds which never cease, but which are less noticed during the day, bewilder the senses. Little, swarthy, half-naked figures (for so they appear by the side of the gigantic fires)

come and go in the flashing light like demons dancing round their unquenchable flames.

The men of this dense population spend a large part of their lives in the bowels of the earth, while the rest of their time is principally given to sleeping and eating. They possess, as a rule, well-formed limbs and great muscular strength, acute intellect, and narrow minds. They see nothing of the world beyond a coal or an iron mine, and associate only with each other. They use their strength to the utmost while they are at work; and too often spend their high wages in buying luxurious food, and a quantity of spirituous liquor for their own consumption. They regard these indulgences as the due compensation for their dismal lives, and the claims of their wives and children are often sadly disregarded. The animal courage of these men must not be forgotten, for they go every day to their work with their lives in their hands. Many of them profess no religious belief whatsoever, and look upon it as mainly the property of women and children, who possess nothing better. They have a certain creed of their own of honour and generosity, and their gratitude towards those who do them a good turn is unbounded. The women lead hard lives of drudgery; drunkenness and immorality are scarcely looked upon as any disgrace. They resent anything like interference with seeming indignation, which is in most cases a false but honestly meant pride, and

a stranger is invariably treated as an intruder until his good intentions are proved. They do not easily attach themselves to new-comers, and are slow and cautious to make friends; but their good-will, once gained, can always be relied upon. In addition to the natives there is a large mixture of Irish Roman Catholic population.

As fresh coal and iron pits were opened in the district around Walsall, accidents became more and more frequent; the medical men represented the extreme inconvenience of sending serious cases requiring immediate attention to the Birmingham hospitals, seven miles distant.

In the month of June, 1863, one of the Town Council of Walsall communicated with a certain Sister Mary, belonging to the "Good Samaritan" order, who was then in charge of the North Ormesby Hospital, and the result was the establishment of an accident hospital in Walsall, containing four beds; the Sisterhood making themselves responsible for the nursing in it. Before the end of the year the number of beds was increased to eight, then to twelve, and finally, before the hospital had been established twelve months, to fourteen. Sister Mary, who bore the brunt of the work, had bravely endured a great deal of opposition, and had established a good reputation for the hospital, when she fell ill, and was obliged to go to Bournemouth for the winter. Sister Dora took

her place, but she had only begun her work when she caught small-pox from the out-patients; she was very ill, and even in her delirium showed the bent of her mind by occupying herself in tearing up her sheets into bandages. The Sisters were little able to attend to her, but as she could not be moved, she was placed in strict quarantine, and none of the servants waited on her.

Hence arose all kinds of conjectures with regard to a little room looking to the front, and which always had the blinds drawn down. The wiseacres among the opponents of the Cottage Hospital got up a story that this room had been converted into an oratory for the use of the Sisters, and that a figure of the Virgin Mary, with a crown on her head, was kept there. The Protestant wrath of the Walsall people was roused, and a persecution of the Sisters began. Stones and mud were thrown up at the hospital windows, and continual petty annoyances were inflicted on the nurses. This foolish excitement was shared even by persons among the more educated classes, who might have known better. Meanwhile, Sister Dora recovered from her illness, and the secretary of the hospital sarcastically informed suspicious inquirers, that it was quite true the room had been devoted to the honour of the Virgin, but it was to the Virgin Dora, not to the Virgin Mary!

Sister Dora took the work of nursing in the

hospital, sometimes alone, sometimes with other Sisters. To the credit of the town of Walsall let it be told that the opposition to the hospital, and to the Sisters' labour of love, gradually died out. The patience and tenderness which had been shown by the nurses began to bear fruit, and almost the last instance of active persecution fell upon Sister Dora. At the time of the celebrated Murphy Riots she was walking rather late in the evening through the town to visit a patient, when a boy from the other side of the road called out, "There goes one of those Sisters of Misery!" and threw a stone which cut open her forehead. Not long afterwards this same young fellow was brought into the hospital, having met with a severe injury in a coal-pit. Sister Dora, who never forgot a face, recognized him at once, saying to herself, "That's my man!" He was some time under her care, and she bestowed upon him probably more than usual attention.

One night, when he was recovering, she found him quietly crying. "I wouldn't ask him what was the matter," Sister Dora said, when relating this story, "because I knew well enough, and I wanted him to confess." At length it came out, with many sobs, "Sister, *I* threw that stone at you." "Oh," she replied; "did you think I did not know that? Why, I knew you the very first minute you came in at the door." "What!" re-

turned he; "you knew me, and have been nursing me like this?" "You see," added Sister Dora, "it was his first practical experience of good returned for evil, and he didn't know what to make of it."

Sister Dora was recalled to Coatham in the month of April, 1865. Her irrepressible spirits made it difficult for her to be as grave and decorous in her manners and habits as became a Sister. One day a large and very handsome donkey, with a reputation for being able to kick anybody off who attempted to ride him, was brought to the door of the Home. Sister Dora said, "Oh, let me ride him—he won't kick me off;" and without any saddle, and in her Sister's dress, she mounted the donkey, who proceeded to plunge and kick vigorously till he got her off his back. She fell on her knees, which were so bruised and swollen for weeks afterwards, that she could not kneel at the services in the chapel without severe pain. Not only did she not choose to let it be known she was suffering, but she dared not confess what was the cause of it, as the horror of the chaplain and Sisters would have known no bounds had they been aware of such an unprofessional prank on the part of one of their members.

Not long after this event, the well-known Sir James Simpson, of Edinburgh, came to the Home in order to find a Sister capable of nursing one of his patients, an old lady, who was so nearly insane

that she needed delicate management and firm control, but who was deemed hardly a fit case for a lunatic asylum. The chaplain recommended one of the Sisters, but Sir James Simpson was scarcely satisfied with her appearance, and asked to be allowed, as it was a peculiar case, to choose for himself. He was conducted over the Home, and its various departments where the Sisters were employed, some in cleaning the rooms, some in washing in the laundry, some in getting up fine linen, some in the wards with the patients, and some in preparing the dinners. Amongst these last was Sister Dora, with her sleeves tucked up, making a pudding. Sir James Simpson did not hesitate a moment. He pointed to her, saying, "Send me that Sister; she is the one for my case."

The insane old lady lived near Coatham, and Sister Dora, whose business it was to sit up with her at night, returned to the Home every day to sleep. The arrangement answered perfectly; the old lady became quiet and manageable, and took such a fancy to her new nurse that she was constantly offering her presents. One night, when all was still, and the old lady knew that her relations were in bed, she ordered Sister Dora to drag a box from under her bed: it contained valuable jewels, which she pressed upon Sister Dora's acceptance, who declined them as firmly and quietly as she could. Her refusal irritated the old lady so strangely,

that she began to use threats of personal violence unless her offer was immediately accepted; these, of course, produced no effect. But the next night, while the patient appeared to be asleep, Sister Dora sat at the window, quietly enjoying the peacefulness of the starlit sky. Suddenly and noiselessly the old lady sprang out of bed, seized her attendant by the shoulder, and brandished a long knife over her head. Sister Dora said not a word, but turned and looked calmly at her. "I wanted to see if I could frighten you!" said the half-crazy woman, and then laid aside her weapon. From that time she always treated her nurse with consideration and kindness, but still tried to make her accept gifts, which it was found prudent to receive, and then to deliver up to the relations next day.

Sister Dora used to say when she related this episode in her life, "An uncommonly unpleasant time I had of it, what with the mad old lady who was fond of me, with the relations who were jealous of me, and with the footman who made love to me, and, because I had my breakfast in the housekeeper's room, took me for a servant, paying me attentions, after the manner of his kind, and getting me good things to eat, although I always said I wanted nothing but a cup of coffee. Then he tried to walk with me coming and going to and from the Home, but I took care to come by the way (as there were two) by which he was least likely to expect me."

In November of that same year, 1865, Sister Dora was again sent to Walsall; and although she went back to Coatham from time to time, and was moved here and there occasionally to nurse private cases of sickness, still it appears that her hospital work began steadily from this time; she was not yet, however, placed in charge of this responsible post. Another Sister, older, and with more experience than herself, was usually at work with her. Her technical knowledge at this time was very slight; she had received no regular training in the art of nursing, and experience she had little or none. In spite of these drawbacks, she managed so to impress the medical men and the members of the committee with her special fitness for the work to be done in their hospital, that when, in Christmas, 1865, a proposal was made on the part of the Sisterhood to remove her to Middlesborough, strong remonstrances were brought to bear, and happily with success, to allow them to keep her at Walsall.

Towards the middle of December she was ordered by the Sisterhood to go and nurse a private case in the south of England. The committee at Walsall were told, at the same time, that another Sister would be sent to take charge of the hospital, but they were persuaded they had got the right woman in the right place, and were not at all disposed to give her up without a struggle. They wrote and remonstrated with those in authority at Coatham,

but before a final answer came, Sister Dora received a letter from her own home, telling her that her father was dangerously ill, and desired to see her at once. After the orders she had received, she did not consider herself at liberty to go to Hauxwell without communication with Coatham; she therefore telegraphed to the Home, telling the condition in which her father was, and his earnest longing for her presence, begging them to send another nurse to the private patient, and thus to leave her free to go home without delay. The almost incredible answer came back immediately: "No; you must go at once to Devonshire."

With a strangely mistaken sense of duty, Sister Dora set off to do the bidding of her self-chosen masters. She had scarcely reached her destination when she received the tidings, forwarded from Walsall, of her father's death. Then came from the Sisterhood a tardy permission to attend the funeral, if she pleased. She wrote back, in bitterness of spirit, to the effect that as when he was alive they would not allow her to go to him, now he was dead, she no longer cared to go. Even the urgent representations made to her by her family that she ought to attend her father's funeral, produced no effect; and she returned to Walsall, but almost broken-hearted, and with no spirit to face the work which there awaited her.

This was the first time that resentment had

sprung up in her mind against the Sisterhood which she had joined in opposition to her father's wishes, and it was the beginning of a breach between her and Coatham which was never thoroughly healed, but went on steadily, though imperceptibly, widening for some years. Surely comment upon such a history is unnecessary.

Sister Dora, in her soreness of spirit, plunged eagerly into the incessant labour which awaited her at Walsall, making vigorous efforts to forget her own trouble, in order that she might lighten the burdens of her poorer neighbours. She said, speaking of this time, "Nobody could possibly be more ignorant than I was; I had everything to learn." She speedily set to work to remedy this ignorance. Her special ambition was to become a good surgical nurse; and her retentive memory and quick observation proved ready helps towards the keen discernment of the character of wounds, and towards the discovery of the exact position of fractures. But more useful, nay, much more important than this, was her singular power of inspiring unbounded confidence in her judgment and skill. This she owed partly, no doubt, to her personal appearance, partly also to her highly-bred, sympathizing manner. Her in-patients were chiefly men and boys, disabled by coal-pit accidents, or wounded by machinery, in the workshops of the district. Besides these, a large number of out-patients, men, women, and

children, visited the hospital daily, for medical treatment, and for the relief of slight injuries. These were, in many cases, such as would have been considered anything but slight at an ordinary infirmary; but no more beds could be crowded into the little house at Walsall, and many patients who might have been taken in with advantage could only have their wounds dressed in the out-patients' ward.

As the hospital gained a reputation, the medical staff became overwhelmed by the crowd of out-patients, and were glad to avail themselves of the help of the Sisters. In this way began Sister Dora's real experience, and that training of eye and of hand, which made her the skilful surgeon she afterwards became. The old doctor who was attached to the hospital was, like men of all classes, attracted in the first instance by her personal charms; but when he found that she possessed, not only wit and spirits enough to render his visits to the hospital delightful, but such coolness, courage, and common sense as he had never before found combined in any woman, he resolved that it should not be his fault if she were not thoroughly instructed in the surgical part of her calling. He taught her to the very best of his power, and allowed her to set simple fractures under his superintendence; and then, discovering that she possessed a very unusual delicacy of touch, he began to teach her the position of the arteries in the human body.

She must have gone through a tolerably severe apprenticeship at this period of her life. It is difficult, nay, impossible, to convey to those who have never experienced anything of the kind, an idea of the constant strain, both physical and moral, which hospital nursing entails. Sister Dora, indeed, was troubled with less than is usual of the physical disgust inseparable from a woman's first acquaintance with ghastly accidents and loathsome diseases; moreover, her intense pity for suffering, and her ardent longing to relieve it, enabled her speedily to overcome all antipathy to sights and sounds such as forced themselves on her notice. But something higher than mere animal courage, and an influence larger and deeper than compassion, were needed to support her in the hourly trials of mind and body which she had to face.

The influence under which Sister Dora had fallen, and which had unsettled her faith, has already been referred to. When she came to Walsall she threw herself into the unceasing round of steady hospital work, not without hopes that in this way she might stifle the uneasy voice within her, which would make itself heard, and perhaps gradually solve the problems which were distracting her mind. Just before she left Coatham she received an offer of marriage, which she was strongly urged, by some members of the Sisterhood and other of her friends, to accept. When she first went to Walsall she

had not settled what her final decision should be. It is evident that her affections were not deeply enough engaged to furnish her own mind with a sufficient excuse for leaving the life of active usefulness to which she had pledged herself by entering the Sisterhood. The problem of her life, and what she should do with it, and whether if it were passed in the married or single state it would be most likely to be useful to the world around her, was not complicated by any strong personal inclination either way.

Two paths lay before her—one up the hill of difficulty and labour which it was her nature to love, through the midst of the struggling and suffering human masses with whom she felt sympathy sufficient to make her eager to give up all else for their good,—a path where her varied powers would have ample scope and exercise. The other was the ordinary woman's lot of wedded joys and sorrows, towards which she inclined with a natural instinct of more than ordinary strength. Her love, almost amounting to a passion, for children, formed no small part of this instinct, and although she was able to indulge this taste largely during her life, she did not cease to regret that she should never have children of her own. Towards the end of her days she was heard to remark, "If I had to begin life over again I would marry, because a woman ought to live with a man, and to be in subjection."

She did not, however, think thus in early life. She clung to her self-chosen path in spite of the openly expressed opinion of many of her friends that she was admirably fitted for domestic duties. They told her that she was throwing herself away; that whether she stayed at Coatham or gave herself up to hospital work at Walsall, her life would be spent among people inferior to herself in education and position, and that her singular talents would be wasted. No wonder they maintained this opinion, for they could not understand the power of influencing others which she felt within her, and the spirit always urging her on to use that power whereby to raise others to her own height, and to put, as it were, some of herself into them, both physically and morally. There was a deep reserve about her which forbade her from disclosing, even to those with whom she was most intimate, her real motives for the ultimate choice of her future life. She felt unable to communicate, to any one, that her only hope of gaining light in her period of darkness lay in active work for the good of others. And the light which she earnestly sought by the healthiest of all methods, and not, we may be sure, by that alone, flashed once more into her soul.

She made up her mind as to her future, and began her work at Walsall, throwing into it, to use the words of one who had helped her largely in her difficulties by his own experience, "great powers

of mind, strong enthusiasm, and wonderful imagination." Her main stumbling-block was the acuteness of her intellect, and the complete surrender of it to historical Christianity was her only possible escape from infidelity. This she was able to accomplish, and then her enthusiasm found its natural vent in a personal devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ. For the expression of that devotion, the entire surrender of herself and all her powers seemed to her wholly inadequate. Fortunately, she was not left to herself at this time, or she would very likely have rushed from one extreme into another, with the impetuosity which was part of her character. She wanted to bind herself strictly to lead a single life, and to that end she would have entered one of the Sisterhoods connected with an extreme section of the Church of England. She became convinced that our Saviour had specially called her to bring souls to Himself, and she fancied she could accomplish such work better under a stricter rule of self-denial than a hospital life would furnish.

Like many people possessed of a strong will, she felt inclined to give it up, once and for all, into the keeping of others, in the vain expectation that it would never trouble her further. The same friend who had already lent her a helping hand, once more gave her wise and sober counsel. He entreated her not to do anything rashly, but to consider her

gifts, and for what they had been bestowed. He pointed out that active service of mind and body seemed her special calling—to this plough, as it were, she had put her hand—and that she might be turning her back on golden opportunities for the very work for which she was chiefly fitted. She took his advice, and resolved to stay where she was.

The account which the founders of the hospital give of her first few months there, is, that she came so very quietly, and went about her work so unobtrusively, that no one has any distinct recollection of her. Her name was mainly known in back slums and dirty streets, where people too low and too miserable even to present themselves at the hospital for the relief of their suffering, were sought out by her, nursed, and in many cases medically treated also. The first thing which the inhabitants of Walsall distinctly remember about Sister Dora is, that in 1866 she had a very serious illness, brought on by exposure to wet and cold and utter disregard of her health. She had been accustomed to boast that she could always sit in her wet clothes without harm; and this she did, it is true, over and over again with impunity. Her reason for this unpardonable neglect of common prudence was, probably, that changing her clothes took time. She used to come home wet through, and hot with hurrying along the streets, to find a crowd of out-patients awaiting her return—

women anxious to get home to the children whom they had left with no one to look after them, and all wanting immediate attention; or some man badly hurt in the coal-pits, who would have bled to death unless his wounds were dressed at once. Her own wet clothes were constantly forgotten, and allowed to dry upon her.

This neglect occurred once too often; a violent chill seized her, and for three weeks she was dangerously ill. Then the people of Walsall began to find out what she was. The hospital was besieged with inquiries, and many, whose curiosity only had been excited about this "Sister Dora," now heard, for the first time, of her good deeds, made her acquaintance, and became her fast friends.

A clergyman who visited her constantly during her illness, and who had scarcely known her before, was astonished at her fortitude, as was every one who ever saw her endure bodily pain. He never forgot one of his early visits to her. He was beginning to read to her, when she said, "Wait a minute, please." She turned away her face, which was smiling and beautiful, as he thought he had never seen a human face before; and his daughter, who was on the other side of the bed, was shocked to see it suddenly convulsed, as if with sharp agony, the tears streaming down the cheeks, and the hands clutching convulsively at the bedclothes. In a moment she

turned back calmly to him and said, "Go on;" and until his daughter afterwards told him what she had seen, he was not in the least aware of the severe struggle through which Sister Dora had passed. From this illness she recovered, and felt herself bound to the Walsall people by the sympathy and kindness she had received from them. But she always expressed her strong belief that she owed her recovery mainly to the prayers of the large congregation at the Church of St. James, Wednesbury, which she used to attend on Sunday evenings whenever her work would allow her to go so far.

The name of the incumbent of this church, the Rev. Richard Twigg, of whom, after his death, it was eloquently said that he had "buried talents which would have won the admiration of the world in the smokiest dens of the Black Country," ought to be mentioned here. For it was under the influence of his teaching and example that Sister Dora developed much of the burning zeal and spirit of self-sacrifice which afterwards distinguished her; and his was the main human support to which she consistently clung throughout her life. She attended his public Scripture classes whenever she could, and kept elaborate notes of his lessons, in order that she might, after she had digested them, reproduce them in a simple form for the benefit of her patients.

At first, she merely brought out this teaching as it was required in individual cases, but after a while, as the hospital grew to be regarded in the light of a regular institution, and old patients became attached to it and to Sister Dora by the bonds of gratitude, her lessons assumed a more systematic shape.

Mr. Twigg was a large-hearted, large-minded man, and his teaching and preaching were mainly of the missionary order, excellently suited to the wants of the half-civilized savages of the coal districts, in which his life was spent. His soul yearned to kindle in the hearts of his people a sense of moral responsibility, and then to lead, and even force them, to face the certainty of a retributive justice awaiting them in a life beyond the grave. The eloquence of language in which he clothed his ideas, combined with a keen insight into human nature, gave him a remarkable influence over the rough men and women for whom he toiled. But not the least of his good works was the helping and guiding hand of fellowship which he always stretched out to Sister Dora, and through her to the sufferers who came under her influence.

She would have been more than human if she had not enjoyed the universal homage paid to her; and although love of admiration may seem a hard term to employ, she was, it must be admitted, by no means free from this very common weakness

of humanity. Although she used her power of inspiring admiration mainly for pure and noble ends, it occasionally became a snare to her, and Mr. Twigg was almost the only friend who took pains not to gratify it. He boldly criticized her actions, and these reproofs led her to inquire into her motives, while his stirring, searching sermons, of which it has been not unjustly said that they "were calculated to send you away supremely uncomfortable about yourself," often saved her from the complacency into which she otherwise might easily have fallen.

CHAPTER III.

HOSPITAL LIFE AND VISIT TO LICHFIELD: 1867–1870.

"The sprites that haunt the mines she could correct and tame,
And bind them as she list."

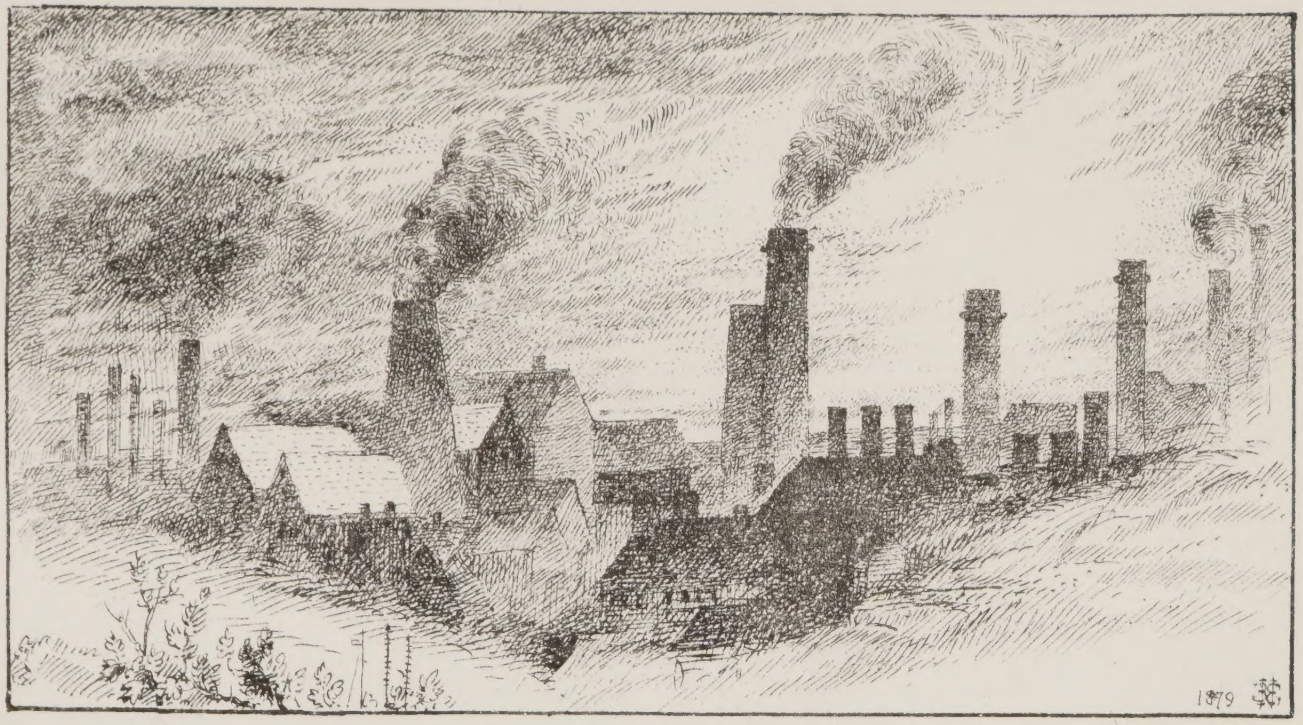
In 1867 it began to be apparent that the two small houses in Bridge Street, containing fourteen beds, were wholly inadequate to supply the year by year increasing need of hospital accommodation, for the rapidly extending town of Walsall; moreover, the situation of Bridge Street did not admit of proper ventilation, and wounds healed less and less quickly, until at last the fatal erysipelas, only too well known in hospitals, broke out, and one man remained for six months under treatment for it. But the hospital received its death-blow when an amputation case was sent out unhealed, after unavailing efforts to complete the cure. The wards were evidently impregnated with malignant air to a hopeless extent, and the committee resolved to build a new hospital on a large and convenient scale, in a healthy situation. An unexceptionable site was happily procured.

The town of Walsall stands on a steep hill, crowned by the spire of the old parish church, towering above the thickly massed houses. The one feature which relieves the blackness of the place is an open space, covered with smoky grass, worn away to bareness in many spots by the games of generations. Over this the winds blow freely, as it slopes upwards, with no intervening houses or chimneys, towards a second brow of the same hill, called "The Mount," on which the church is placed. The committee, after a little negotiation, were able to purchase a site for their new hospital on the top of this hill. Little difficulty was found in raising money for such an object, towards which Sister Dora herself gave liberally.

The building was, in most respects, thoroughly convenient, and contained twenty-eight beds, with capability of accommodating a larger number of patients when occasion might require it. The arrangements were such as to render it just possible for one person, possessing the activity of Sister Dora in mind and body, to do the entire nursing; and the three wards into which the building was divided were so placed, that when she read prayers she could be heard distinctly by all the occupants of them. The out-patient department was the least convenient portion of the building. It was too small for the numbers which crowded into it, and was, moreover, entirely unconnected with the main

building—an arrangement highly undesirable. This defect was remedied by Sister Dora herself, who devised a plan to connect it with the hospital by a glass passage, which she converted into a green-house, and thus made it serve two purposes. The view from the windows was such as few hospitals are favoured with. A garden, laid out chiefly with vegetables, but containing a green lawn of tolerable extent, surrounded the building, and the trees and shrubs flourished in spite of the bleak position and the smoke. The slope of garden formed a fore-ground to a prospect of endless chimneys and machinery, with a wide extent of sky beyond. The line of the South Staffordshire railroad ran at the bottom of the slope on which the hospital was placed, and served as an amusement for all the patients, but especially for those connected with the railway; for these knew how to distinguish the whistle made by the driver of each particular engine, saying, "There goes Jack!" or, "Hullo! that's our Bill!" and thus to recognize their mates as they piloted their trains to and from Birmingham.

The last patient was dismissed from Bridge Street, and the move into the new hospital was accomplished, in 1868. Sister Dora's work became more engrossing when this larger field was opened for it; the men's beds were constantly full, and even the women's ward was hardly ever entirely


1879

empty. She was now looked upon by the committee as the head of the nursing department of their hospital, and the entire organization of the internal arrangements of the new building was laid upon her shoulders.

Just at this period small-pox broke out in Walsall, and for the first time became an epidemic in the town, the infection clinging to the overcrowded courts and alleys. Whenever a lull in the cases occurred, and hopes were entertained that the malady was dying out, straightway came a fresh outburst, and for several months the horrible disease lingered on. Sister Dora eagerly threw herself into this new sphere of labour. Her hospital work, however, went on just as usual; and she argued that as she was already exposed to every risk of infection from the out-patients, who sometimes came up to have wounds dressed with the small-pox out upon them, there could be no reason why she should not nurse the unhappy victims at their own homes. Whenever she had any time to spare, or whenever she could "make half an hour," as she expressed it, by going without a regular meal, or by getting through her round of hospital work with more than usual speed, she went down to visit some small-pox-stricken street, and did what she could for the sufferers. Occasionally she sat up whole nights with dying patients, for whom it was considered useless to do any-

thing, and who were therefore deserted by their friends.

One night she was sent for by a poor man who was much attached to her, and who was dying of what she called "black-pox," a violent form of small-pox. She went at once and found him almost in the last extremity. All his relations had fled, and a neighbour alone was with him, doing what she could for him. When Sister Dora found that only one small piece of candle was left in the house, she gave the woman some money, begging her to go and buy some means of light, while she stayed with the man. She sat on by his bed, but the woman, who had probably spent the money at the public-house, never returned; and after some little while the dying man raised himself up in bed with a last effort, saying, "Sister, kiss me before I die." She took him, all covered as he was with the loathsome disease, into her arms, and kissed him, the candle going out almost as she did so, leaving them in total darkness. He implored her not to leave him while he lived, although he might have known she would never do that. It was then past midnight, and she sat on, for how long she knew not, until he died. Even then she waited, fancying, as she could not see him, that he might be still alive, till in the early dawn she groped her way to the door, and went to find some neighbours.

Her capacity for going without rest or food was marvellous; and her determination to do all in her power at this particular time was strengthened by a firm idea that she should catch the small-pox and die. Probably her wish was father to that thought, for Mr. Pattison's death, and the remorse which she felt about her own conduct towards him, seemed to have taken away from her, for the time, all desire for life.

The work of nursing was considerably lightened by the presence of an old and faithful servant of the Pattison family. Mrs. H—— had known Sister Dora from her early childhood, and was attached to the interests of the whole family with the single-minded, unselfish devotion of an old-fashioned servant. She looked after the servants—only two in number, kept the hospital linen in order, and made herself useful in many other ways. She learnt to dress wounds, so as to save Sister Dora from much drudgery, and to leave her more time to attend to those cases with which none but herself or the surgeon could deal. Mrs. H—— soon became so efficient a helper that she was not only employed to sit up at night when there were serious cases in hand, but she was frequently sent out to houses where a special nurse for illness was required.

Sister Dora was led to give particular attention to what is called conservative surgery. Her sympathy was aroused for the unfortunate men who

came in, often so much crushed and mangled that amputation of one or more limbs was necessary to save their lives, and who used to remark when told what their fate must be, "Then you might as well kill me at once, if you are going to take off my leg, or arm, or hand, for I don't know what's to become of me or of my wife and children." A fine, healthy young man was one night brought in with his arm torn and twisted by a machine. The doctor pronounced that nothing could save it, and that he must amputate it at once. The sufferer's groan and expression of despair went to the Sister's heart. She scanned the torn limb with her quick, scrutinizing glance, as if she would look through the wound to the state of the circulation below, and then measured with her eye the fine healthy form before her.

The man looked from one face to the other for a ray of hope, and seeing the deep pity in her expression, exclaimed, "Oh, Sister! save my arm for me; it's my right arm." Sister Dora instantly turned to the surgeon, saying, "I believe I can save this arm if you will let me try?" "Are you mad?" answered he. "I tell you it's an impossibility; mortification will set in in a few hours; nothing but amputation can save his life." She turned quickly to the anxious patient, "Are you willing for me to try and save your arm, my man?" What would he not have been willing to let the woman do, who

turned upon him such a winning face, and spoke in tones so strangely sympathetic? He joyfully gave consent. The doctor was as angry as he was ever known to be with Sister Dora, and walked away saying, "Well, remember it's your arm: if you choose to have the young man's death upon your conscience, I shall not interfere; but I wash my hands of him. Don't think I am going to help you." It was indeed a heavy responsibility for a nurse to take upon herself, but Sister Dora never shrank from a burden which seemed to be cast upon her. It was by no means the first time that she had disagreed with the surgical opinion; often and often had she pleaded hard for delay in the removal of a limb which, she ventured to think, might by skill and patience be saved. On this occasion her patient's entire confidence in her was sufficient encouragement. She watched and tended "her arm," as she called it, almost literally night and day for three weeks. It was a period of terrible suspense and anxiety. "How I prayed over that arm!" she used to say afterwards.

At the end of that time she waited till she thought the doctor was in a particularly amiable mood, and then she begged him to come and look at her work. Not with a very good grace, he complied. No professional man could possibly like to have his opinion distinctly proved to be wrong by any one, least of all by a woman working under

his own superintendence. But his astonishment overcame his displeasure when he beheld the arm, which she unbandaged and displayed to him, no longer mangled, but straightened, and in a healthy, promising condition. "Why, you have saved it!" he exclaimed, "and it will be a useful arm to him for many a long year." Triumph does not at all express Sister Dora's feelings as she heard this verdict, and yet her thankfulness was naturally not unmixed with triumph, and she cried for happiness.

The surgeon, without whose leave, be it remembered, she could not have done this, and who was justly proud of her as his own pupil, brought the rest of the hospital staff, "to show them what might be done," as he said. The man, who went by the name of "Sister's arm" in the hospital, became one of her most devoted admirers. She would not allow him to go until he was in a fair way to be able to work again; and after he ceased to be an in-patient he constantly came up to have his arm "looked at," which meant that he wanted to look at the woman who had given him back all that made life worth having. This was by no means a solitary case: in many other instances, far too numerous to mention, she displayed this high moral courage, without which she might have been a good nurse, but could never have attempted to take in hand difficult cases which involved serious responsibility to herself.

Her habit of putting all thought of self entirely out of the question, on every occasion, grew upon her, and it was fortunate that she had Mrs. H—— to think of her interests, otherwise she would have soon worn herself out, by forgetting her meals, and by cutting short her needful supply of sleep. With the consent of the committee, Sister Dora now began to take ladies for a few months at a time as pupils, and to train them as surgical nurses. It was a strange kind of desultory training which they received, and such as no one who was not physically strong could endure without permanent injury to health. It was not possible for Sister Dora to carry on, without help, the work of attending to both in and out patients when there were many serious cases in the wards. If, for instance, many children were in the women's department, the mere washing and dressing of them took up much valuable time, and could as well be performed by an inexperienced nurse as by Sister Dora herself.

Not that the children were by any means of this opinion, and small wonder that nobody was like "Sister" to them; for she had a remarkable way of making herself and her will acceptable to them, thereby inducing them to submit with tolerable patience to painful operations at her hands, and to stop crying when ordered to do so. It was wonderful how soon they ceased to clamour for their mothers, and how much at home they felt them-

selves, when they were placed in Sister Dora's loving arms. She would take a poor little dirty, miserable thing, which had perhaps badly scalded itself, from its mother, saying to her, "Now go quickly, and don't let him see you again; he is sure to be happy with me—children always are—and come again to-night and you shall see him asleep." Instead of putting the child to bed to cry itself to sleep, she would soothe it by carrying it about wrapped in a blanket, on one arm, and saying, "Don't you cry; Sister's got you!" while with her other hand she dressed wounds, and pursued her manifold duties. The child, meanwhile, attached itself to her happily, under the spell of that magnetic influence which, as she said, children always recognized. She would go on telling them stories, and talking to her grown-up patients, in the same breath, and she never allowed them to fret or to be unhappy if she could help it. "It goes to my heart," she would say of the wailing cry of a child in pain, and she would instantly try to devise some method of diverting its thoughts from the inevitable suffering which she could not endure to witness.

Here is an instance of the combination in her heart of sympathy for the suffering of a child, and of intense indignation against those who would corrupt its innocence by their example.

One afternoon, after the great crowd in the out-patients' ward had departed, a pretty, delicate-

looking child about three years old was brought in. It could not speak plainly, but it came up to Sister Dora as if it wanted to be caressed. Two men who brought it said its arm had been broken three weeks before, and would not unite, for it had been badly set. She began to unwind the bandage round the arm, and a torrent of curses came from the baby lips. One of the men who was standing near, although such sounds must have been only too familiar to him, laid his hand over its mouth, saying, "Sister must not hear such words," and would have silenced her roughly if Sister herself had not interfered.

When the child was gone, she turned to those still standing by, and asked them where they supposed a baby had learnt to defile its mouth with such foul language; and whether it was worse for a lady to hear or for a child to be taught to utter such impurity? She spoke very quietly, but with the flashing eyes which always, with her, betokened great indignation.

The lady-pupil who witnessed the scene will never forget it. The patients slunk away without a word, crestfallen, and it is to be hoped, conscience-stricken.

It was rarely indeed that even those very rough men and women who always expressed themselves in foul language ventured to use it in Sister Dora's hearing. The roughest of them could not

but feel the natural dignity of her presence, and it seemed to rouse in the men the latent chivalry which dwelt in their nature, although it had never been called out before. On some old and hardened sinners she made but little impression, but even these dared not offend her wilfully by outrageous language. She knew well how to wield the weapon of satire, and if a patient persisted in swearing, or in misbehaviour at prayers, or, what was in her eyes the greatest offence of all, in teaching the young ones bad words and ways, she would contrive to point the finger of scorn at him, till he became the laughing-stock of the whole ward, and only too glad to make his peace with her on any terms.

At one time she had a man in the ward who thought fit to show his contempt for religious observances by making loud remarks during prayers. When he was requested to be quiet, he took refuge in rustling the newspaper, so that his neighbours could not hear a word of what was being read. He gave, besides, every kind of trouble, grumbling at what was done for him, and setting on the other patients to be discontented. He became extremely ill, and for several nights Sister Dora scarcely left his bedside, moving him constantly into fresh positions, turning his pillows, and trying in every way to relieve his suffering. He never thanked her, but one night he suddenly said, "I hope they

pay you well for this?" "Yes," she replied, "very well." "Come, now," returned he, "what do they give you? I really want to know." "Well," said Sister Dora, as she related this story, "then I thought I might as well tell him how I considered I was paid. He listened attentively, and from that night forward he altered his behaviour, actually going so far as to say 'Amen' at prayers, because, I suppose, he thought it would please me." But what was more to the purpose, he tried to give as little, instead of as much trouble as he could, for the remainder of the time that he was in the hospital.

Another man, who was brought in much hurt, continually swore the whole time she was doing what was necessary for his relief. "Stop that," she remarked curtly; and the man did stop, but began again as soon as his pain became severe. "What's the good of that?" said Sister Dora; "*that* won't make it any easier to bear." "No; but I must say something when it comes so bad on me, Sister." "Very well, then, say 'poker and tongs,'" she retorted; and ever after that, when the man was in his bed at one end of the ward, and the Sister, as she passed down the room, heard him muttering oaths which he dared not pronounce aloud, she called out for the benefit of the ward, "Poker and tongs; but nothing else." She felt, indeed, more than ordinary disgust at profane and irreverent

language, and this repugnance she expressed on one notable occasion.

She was travelling, as usual, third class—because, as she affirmed, she preferred the company,—when a number of half-drunken navvies got in after her, and before she could change her carriage the train was in motion. She recollected that her dress, a black gown and cloak, with a quiet black bonnet and veil, would probably, as on former encounters with half-intoxicated men, protect her from insult. Her fellow-travellers began to talk, and at last one of them swore several blasphemous oaths. Sister Dora's whole soul burnt within her, and she thought, "Shall I sit and hear this?" but then came the reflection, "What will they do to me if I interfere?" and this dread kept her quiet a moment or two longer. But the language became more and more violent, and it passed through her mind, "What must these men think of any woman who can sit by and hear such words unmoved; but, above all, what will they think of a woman in my dress who is afraid to speak to them?"

At once she stood up her full height in the carriage, and called out loudly, "I will not hear the Master whom I serve spoken of in this way." Immediately they dragged her down into her seat, with a torrent of oaths, and one of the most violent roared, "Hold your jaw, you fool; do you want your face smashed in?" They held her down

on the seat between them; nor did she attempt to struggle, satisfied with having made her open protest. At the next station they let her go, and she quickly got out of the carriage. A minute after, while she was standing on the platform, she heard a rough voice behind her. "Shake hands, mum! you're a good-plucked one, you are! You were right and we were wrong." She gave her hand to the man, who hurried away, for fear, no doubt, that his comrades should jeer at him.

She was by no means, however, one of those good people who drag in religion and their own personal views about it by the head and shoulders on every possible occasion. She had far too lively an imagination to commit this common blunder; she was able to put herself in the place of those hard-worked, coarse-minded men, those abandoned and outcast women, and those neglected and ill-treated children among whom her life was spent, and to conceive with a shudder of horror what she herself might have been had she been placed in their circumstances. "Oh," she said to a friend once, speaking of a miserable woman, "I'd have been such a fiend if I'd been her and had that husband." The humorous side of her nature, too, was strongly alive to the absurdity of incongruous preaching, and of anything approaching to cant. She never cast her pearls before swine.

When the bell at the head of her bed was rung

at night, she said to herself, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee," and flinging on her dress, cap, and apron, hurried down, to find some men who had been having a drunken brawl in the dead of night in the streets, and had kicked, or otherwise hurt one another, and had just sense enough left them to walk up to the hospital. She would first dress their wounds and sew up their cuts, in her usual gentle manner, and then she would ask them "why they did not behave like respectable members of society, instead of fighting in the streets, and then getting her up at unearthly hours of the night, to mend their broken heads and bones?"

Against drunkenness, which has been already mentioned as the chief vice amongst the dwellers in the Black Country, she waged a constant warfare. She was not a total abstainer herself, and nobody ever heard her urge upon working men the duty of never touching a drop of drink, although she well knew that, for habitual drunkards, such self-denial was the only escape from utter ruin. It was impossible for her to shut her eyes to the fact, that numberless cases of hopeless bad legs, of old wounds breaking out afresh, of new ones refusing to heal, were to be attributed entirely to the habit of drinking.

She used to put this forcibly before her patients, telling them, that so long as they went on in

their old ways, she could do nothing for them. Again and again she would say, as she unbound a leg or an arm, "Oh, you've been at it again! No," as the man began with some excuse, "you can't deceive me, so you'd better say nothing. I declare, now, the next time you come up and show me your leg in this condition, I'll not touch it." But they always knew she would touch it, and repeatedly she would heal up wounds only to have them break out afresh from the poison of continued drunkenness. She was never weary of trying to mend both their legs and their ways, and went on hoping against hope, holding out a hand of encouragement, if by any means she might rescue from the mire some one struggling soul. Of course she not unfrequently met with grievous disappointments.

One young man, for example, was in the hospital for many weeks, with a compound fracture caused in a drunken fray. Sister Dora gained her usual influence over him, and he finally promised never to touch drink again. One afternoon, when he was almost recovered, he begged for leave to go out. She gave it him, reminding him at the same time earnestly of his promise. He came back towards night drunk, and reeled up against her in the ward. Sister Dora laid down her head on the table in her little sitting-room and cried bitterly. But she was not always unsuccessful.

Many men attribute their reformation from other vices besides intemperance to their sojourn in the hospital. She took pains to let them see that she cared for them individually, telling them that she prayed for them one by one, and that when they went out from under her care she would not forget them. They well knew that the hospital was a home to which they might always turn, a refuge where a welcome ever awaited them, and above all, what some of them perhaps thought of more than anything else, where they were sure of spending a merry half-hour, and of having a good laugh at any time.

For a thoroughly pleasant spirit, proceeding from Sister Dora herself, reigned throughout the wards, and this characteristic mainly distinguished Walsall Hospital from every other institution of its kind. Among the men a continual buzz of conversation went on, controlled and usually led by Sister Dora, who all the while performed her work in the passage, or moved from bed to bed. She considered what she called the "tone" of the ward one of her main responsibilities, and affirmed that it was impossible to keep a mixed party of men and boys of all dispositions and tempers out of mischief, unless entertainment of mind was provided for them.

Men of the working classes have very little real amusement in their lives, public-house company and

low songs and jokes being their only experience of what they call fun. It is the exception when their wives are, in any sense, companions to them. Although these may be lively enough by nature, hard work and many children are calculated to depress even the most merry-hearted among them. A woman, therefore, with whom none of them could ever venture to take a liberty, who, without in the least descending from her social position, could yet laugh and joke with them day after day, who could raise their spirits by her own delightful fun when they were in pain or anxiety, who was willing, when she had a few minutes to spare, to read to them, who always had an answer to their questions, political or theological, and who would throw herself into their concerns, and feel for their troubles as if they were her own, was an entirely new idea to them. "Make you laugh!" said a big Irishman; "she'd make you laugh when you were dying."

She would invent games for the boys to play together, and happy the man or boy who could catch her for a game of chess or draughts! It was a rare event, but when she found time she threw herself heartily into the game, and the envious lookers-on were fain to content themselves with watching her absorbed face as she sat over the board.

She did not care to nurse the women, unless there were some very engaging children in their ward;

and although she did her duty by them, she preferred leaving them, except in very serious cases, to the charge of her lady-pupils, or of Mrs. H——. But she always went round the whole hospital with the surgeon, and every night her visit was paid to each separate bed. In the summer, patients who were well enough were allowed to sit in the garden, and haymaking on the lawn was made delightful to any poor little town-bred convalescents by Sister Dora's games with them among the haycocks.

The produce of the garden, fruit and vegetables, was almost entirely kept for the patients, and she contrived to consult delicate appetites and peculiar tastes, yet with infinite tact to avoid all appearance of favouritism in the distribution of the food. The knowledge that she herself fared exactly the same as the rest of the household, except, indeed, in not partaking of any little delicacy which was always reserved for some extreme case, checked even the possibility of grumbling over the diet. She carved entirely herself, and never allowed the servants, or even the lady-pupils, to have any hand in it, so that every patient's plate passed immediately under her own eye.

In consequence of this arrangement, the patients often had to wait some time for their meals, especially for their tea, if there were a large number of out-patients to be attended to in the afternoon. But they would gladly have waited any length

of time rather than have tea served to them by any other hand. Who but she could bring in such histories of what she had been doing that afternoon? or who could ask with such real anxiety and tenderness after their pain, and how they had been bearing it?—a question which not a few of them shrank from answering. Who could settle so satisfactorily the dispute which had arisen between the occupant of bed number one, who was a trades-union man, and of bed number two, who would take the part of the employers? "Oh, I am sorry for you; I wish I could bear it for you, I'm sure," was the comforting speech addressed to one groaning sufferer. To another, "Now, don't you be making a fuss, you're not so very bad; tea will cure *you;*" while the ward resounded with, "Sister, come and look at my leg;" "Sister, my back do ache;" "Sister, I wish you would give me another pillow;" or, "I'm sure the bandage is come undone on my knee." (This for the sake of getting some attention, probably.) To all of which Sister Dora would make some merry or sympathetic answer, suited to the needs of the case, usually prefacing her words with an expressive and long-drawn out "Oh!" well known to all her friends, but quite indescribable in its effect, and in the variety of intonation, of which in her mouth it was capable. It could be lively, sympathetic, or reproachful; but it had nearly always a cheerful ring in it: and, indeed, she could

hardly ever divest her words and manner of this cheerfulness, which was her chief attribute.

Her father's name for her, "Sunshine," may be used to express what she was to the heart of a patient, so that the wards which were, in the nature of things, the scene of sorrow and suffering, instead of proving to the inmates a dreary and lonely place of confinement, are looked back upon by many of them as the home where the happiest portion of their lives was passed.

Sister Dora was an entirely natural person, and it was impossible to share her company for five minutes, and not be struck by the quaintness and originality of her expressions. "I have thoughts too big for my brains; haven't you?" she remarked, half jokingly, to one of her lady-pupils. Her fun flowed out spontaneously, and as if she could not help it, bubbling and sparkling with a clear brilliancy, pervading and enlivening the wards of her hospital, just as a cool clear stream makes green and fruitful the fields through which it runs.

Familiarity with the three terrors of human life, pain, disease, and death, in their most ghastly forms, is apt to produce a hardening effect upon a coarse or even a commonplace nature. But in her, the scenes which hourly passed before her seemed to rouse such an excess of sensibility and tenderness, that it was, to use her own expression, by "getting fun" out of her work alone, that she could keep

her mind in tune with all she had to do. It was the humorous aspect of everything which made the liveliest impression on her mind. "My dear," she would say, "if I could not laugh over the things, I don't know what I should do." But that her lively flow of spirits gave rise to misapprehension about her character, among the very people for whom she sacrificed herself, the following conversation, overheard by a clergyman travelling on the railroad between Walsall and Birmingham, will show.

Two women in the carriage with him were discussing Sister Dora. One remarked, "Ah! her's got no nerves." "Hasn't her, though?" returned the other; "isn't her just as tender as a baby?" "What!" replied the first woman, "stand and see a man's leg cut off?" "Ah!" retorted Sister Dora's champion, "that's only because her's used to it. Her's real tender-hearted, and no mistake." This last opinion gradually but steadily gained ground in and around Walsall, until, among that class for which she ministered in the hospital, not a dissentient voice was to be heard.

Almost the only occasion on which Sister Dora travelled first class, her ticket having been given her, she found herself in the company of two so-called "young ladies," very smartly dressed, and in the "pork-pie" hats which the fast young women of that period were wont to wear. In the corner opposite to them sat a very quiet young man,

evidently wrapped up in his book, and only anxious to be let alone. But the girls were on the look-out for a lark, and were determined not to lose this golden opportunity. "And they *did* plague the poor youth," said Sister Dora. "They flirted outrageously with him; they made him useful to them in every possible way, and ended up by declaring that he must get them some buns!" Having executed this final command, he wisely made his escape to another carriage.

The young women crowned their audacity by never even offering to pay him for the buns he had bought them. "I *was* angry with them," said Sister Dora, "and quite ashamed of my sex. I felt as if I must give them a piece of my mind, so I said, 'May I ask if you know that gentleman?' They gave me a rude stare, and giggled out, 'Oh no; we never saw him before.' 'Are you not going to pay him for those buns?' 'Dear, no! Why should we? He ought to be only too glad to oblige ladies.' Then," said Sister Dora, "I told them what I thought of them, and asked them whether they imagined it was ladylike behaviour to scrape acquaintance with a strange young man, and make him spend money on them. I flatter myself," she ended, "that I made the girls ashamed of themselves, and before we parted we were excellent friends, and they had promised me never to behave so again."

There remained, indeed, up to her death, a few belonging to her own station in life who, as they did not fall under the immediate fascination of her presence, were wont to characterize her behaviour as undignified and unfeminine. Over the managing committee of the hospital she considered it her duty to exercise all the influence of which she was capable. These were mainly men, well to do and actively engaged in trade, or retired tradesmen. She had to walk warily in order to keep in good humour the different elements which formed the committee, to whom, as they were men of various shades of opinion, both in religion and politics, it was not always easy to avoid giving offence.

It was never her way to yield her will in matters which she considered of importance; but just as in her childish days she was in no hurry to get her own way provided always that she saw, even in the far distance, a good chance of obtaining it, so now she would condescend to cajole and even to flatter, individually or collectively, those in whose hands the management of the hospital was placed. As occasion required, she would bring to bear her unlimited powers of humour and drollery, or turn on them the cold shoulder, sometimes giving them short answers and cool glances, until they were glad to surrender unconditionally and allow her to do as she liked. Her feminine devices were endless; one move, the last of all, she carefully kept in reserve, and only played it on desperate occasions.

When every other attempt had failed, she would go before the committee and boldly demand that she might be allowed to carry into effect some plan to which she knew they would object. When she met with the anticipated refusal, she replied, "Very well, then, I shall go," and without giving her check-mated opponents time to say a word, she would march out of the room. She was perfectly aware that in a few hours they would entreat her to make her own terms, and do anything she pleased, except leave the hospital. More than once, however, they positively accepted her resignation, and began to look out for her successor. This, indeed, was more than she bargained for, but the result was the same; no second Sister Dora was to be found, and the matter always ended in her keeping her post.

The Sister occupied a very solitary position at Walsall. She was surrounded by hundreds of people, whose needs, physical and moral, she supplied out of her own large store. She was always giving out, spending and being spent for others, and among all these crowds probably not one single soul could give her anything in return beyond genuine gratitude, love, and admiration. These are valuable in their way, but no one can live on them. She was friendly with everybody, to whatever class of society they belonged, and contrived, unconsciously perhaps, with true well-bred tact, to give each of her acquaintance the impression that she

was receiving, rather than conferring, a benefit by her intercourse with them. It mattered, indeed, but little that she found no one in Walsall of her own social position, but that she had no one with whom to measure her intellect was far more serious. The clergy, hard-working, earnest, devoted men, as they must be to work in the Black Country at all, lived too far off to afford her companionship, and, with the single exception of Mr. Twigg, were hardly men of congenial spirit with her own.

The surgeons attached to the hospital were, it is true, one or two of them, unusually highly gifted men. But her intercourse with them was mainly in the way of business, and it behoved a person in her position, with so many eyes upon her, to be extremely cautious how she exchanged the ceremonious terms of courtesy which exist between doctor and lady-nurse for any more friendly feeling. Occasionally she had ladies who came to her to be trained, and who became for the time more or less of companions, but they stayed only a few months, and then were lost sight of, for she had no time to keep up a regular correspondence with any one.

She was in this isolated condition, when a man came across her path with whom she was able to associate on terms of equal companionship, with whom she could discuss a multitude of non-professional subjects, and in whose society she found an

ever-increasing pleasure. It is nothing to say that he admired her—no one could look at her without admiration—or that he found her ideas fresh and original, and her conversation brilliant and racy. Every one felt thus much when in her presence, but this man was able to appreciate as well as to admire her. He could give her the intelligent sympathy and support for which all her life she had craved; he was the only person she had ever met who could attempt to understand her strange imaginations and restless longings for the attainment, even in this world, of something higher and better than ordinary human life can offer. He was, in short, her superior in every respect but one—he had no faith in revealed religion, and therefore, in that which had become to her the mainspring of action, he was wholly wanting. This he did not attempt to hide from her—nay, from her very first acquaintance with him she knew the truth.

She had only lately been herself drawn, as it were, out of the mire of scepticism and of tormenting doubts, and now the old temptation was presented to her in a new and fascinating form. Gradually but surely she allowed herself to yield to it, and at last became engaged to this man, of whom it may be said that he loved her with an unselfish devotion all but worthy of its object, and to whom she was ready to give herself up body and soul. She seemed suddenly to change her nature, and to

throw to the winds all considerations, save the satisfaction of this passionate attachment. Had she been striving "to wind herself too high for sinful man beneath the sky?" Was this trial meant to test to the very utmost the reality of her high professions? Did she fail in order that she might learn humility by passing through the furnace of suffering? To questions such as these no answer can ever be given on this side of the grave.

The same friend who had delivered her once before came to her rescue now. He bade her to be true to her professions, if not for her own sake, at least for that of others, and he urgently entreated her to pause and consider what she was about to do. He reminded her, that either her own faith would not suffice to stand against the power of this man's intellect, or else, that she must suffer the misery of seeing him, with whom her life was to be passed, differ from herself on subjects which she considered the most momentous of all. More, far more than this; he pressed upon her, by that supreme personal love for God which he believed to be all this while lying dormant, and not really quenched within her, to draw back while there was yet time. His arguments in the end prevailed, and the engagement was broken off; but not the least part of the suffering which her exercise of courage entailed upon her must have been the knowledge that she had treated her lover with the utmost

unfairness; that she had not only shown disrespect towards the faith which she professed, but had given him cause to think meanly of her principles and of her conduct.

No wonder that, after such a severe mental strain, she should have an illness. She was hard at work as usual one day, when she fainted away upon one of the beds. The fit proved to be the beginning of an attack of pyæmia, and matter formed in the knee, to the despair of the old surgeon, who thought that amputation of the leg would be necessary in order to save life. Like many of her own patients, she vowed that she would not submit to the operation, for that she would rather die than live. This, no doubt, was true enough, and indeed ever afterwards she showed a carelessness and recklessness about her health, painful to witness. The poor old doctor went out of the hospital in tears, saying, "If Sister Dora dies, I'll never enter these doors again." But she affirmed that she was going to recover, and although she was ill for a month, and was obliged to leave her patients in the charge of her lady-pupil, she was as good as her word.

One morning, on hearing that there was to be a very serious operation, at which her presence would have been greatly missed, she got out of bed, and fell straight into her old duties, without going through any period of convalescence. Many had been the anxious and heartfelt inquiries during her

sickness, but none had so much touched her as those of the young man whose arm she had formerly saved. He walked over from the place where he worked, eleven miles distant, every Sunday morning, his only holiday. When the servant appeared in answer to his vigorous pull at the hospital bell, he eagerly inquired, "How's Sister?" and when he had received his answer, said, "Tell her that's *her* arm that rang the bell," and walked back again.

In the early spring of the year 1869, the governess in the family of the writer of this memoir fell dangerously ill, and a sick-nurse was required. In answer to a telegram sent from Lichfield, Sister Dora herself appeared. She had then scarcely been heard of beyond her own immediate neighbourhood, and none of the household knew her by sight. All were struck at once, first by the singular beauty and refined appearance and speech of the supposed nurse, next by the shrewdness of the questions which she put as to the nature of the case for which a nurse was required. She soon departed, saying she would send a nurse, but it would not be till very late that evening.

Between eleven and twelve at night Sister Dora came back, looking very merry, and like a boy escaped from school. As she got out of the railway omnibus she tendered her sixpenny fare to the conductor. He held it in the palm of his extended hand, and looking comically first at her face and

then at the sixpence, remarked, "What! take a sixpence from *you*, Sister! Not if I knows it!" And in the darkness she recognized an old hospital patient. On coming into the house, she merely said, "Well, I couldn't find you a nurse, so I've come myself." She spent the rest of the night in sitting up with the patient. She came down to breakfast in the morning as fresh as, or rather fresher than, those who had passed the hours in bed. During the next day she took no rest, except by coming down to luncheon and dinner with the family, whom she kept in fits of laughter, and who were delighted to find themselves in such good company; and she proposed to sit up again at night, saying, in answer to remonstrances, "Oh, I'm used to it. I always find I can sit up seven nights nursing if I go to bed the eighth."

She slept occasionally in the daytime, whenever the desire to go out in the carriage instead did not prove irresistible. A drive into the country seemed to give her boundless pleasure. The first time she went out she clasped her hands and cried out with delight at the commonest objects. "Oh, look at the trees and the green grass! It is so long since I saw them." As she drove along, she laughed out loud like a child at the sight of the flowers in the hedgerows, her spirits and enthusiasm carrying away her companions, till they too laughed to see her enjoyment.

Her patient was suffering from pleurisy, a form of illness not suited to display Sister Dora's powers, which had been exercised almost exclusively on surgical cases. She possessed but little experience of serious illness apart from surgery, and what little training she had gained at Coatham was chiefly surgical. In after years she learnt more of the refinements of nursing than she knew at this time, but it is not likely that she ever had the opportunity of becoming a first-rate medical nurse. She was away from Walsall for three weeks on this occasion, and did not leave her patient until she had herself taken her safely to her south-country home.

When the time came for the nurse's departure, every one, old and young, was grieved to lose her. One of the daughters of the house asked whether Sister Dora would not give her some training as a surgical nurse at Walsall. The answer, given with humorous emphasis, was, "No, certainly not! You're *much* too dainty a piece of goods."

Twice during these three weeks, which she called her holiday, she was summoned to Walsall, in order that, by her personal influence, she might induce patients in the hospital to submit to necessary operations. The difficult and delicate task, first of telling a person, whose nervous system has been shaken by a severe accident, that a serious, perhaps a dangerous, operation must be undergone

in order to save life, and then of bracing their nerves until they have sufficient courage to face the ordeal, often fell to her lot. This duty she performed with unusual tact, and poor frightened creatures have been so well sustained and comforted by her courage, that they have declared they hardly minded anything "so that Sister was there."

Children terribly burnt and scalded were constantly brought to the hospital, and the manner of dressing and treating such cases occupied a large share of Sister Dora's thoughts and attention. She was not satisfied until she could succeed in entirely restoring a tolerably healthy surface of skin over the charred wounds. The secret of her success in the treatment of burns ought, no doubt, to be largely attributed to her wide experience in this particular line. Scarcely any twelve hours passed in which some workman did not appear, scalded from a boiler, or, what was far worse, by molten metal. Often, in a single day, several children more or less badly burnt, were brought to the hospital. Whenever it was at all possible she dressed their wounds, and sent them home with the assurance that she would come herself and see how they were getting on. She would rather give herself this extra fatigue than have the wards and beds tainted by the effluvia from burnt wounds. Sister Dora's experience in the treatment of the scalds and burns of children led her to adopt a

method of her own, founded mainly upon common sense. The surgeons wisely forbore to interfere with her in these kind of cases, where they knew that her practice was likely to be more efficacious than their own.

If a large surface of the body was burnt, or if the child seemed beside itself with terror, she did not touch the wounds themselves, but only carefully excluded the air from them by means of cotton wool and blankets wrapped round the body. She put hot bottles and flannel to the feet, and, if necessary, ice to the head. Then she gave her attention to soothing and consoling the shocked nerves, a state which she considered to be often a more immediate source of danger to the life of the child than the actual injuries. She fed it with milk and brandy, unless it violently refused food, when she would let it alone until it came round, saying that force or anything which involved even a slight further shock to the system, was worse than useless. Sometimes, of course, the fatal sleep of exhaustion, from which there was no awakening, would follow; but more often than not food was successfully administered, and after a few hours, Sister Dora, having gained the child's confidence, could dress the wounds without fear of exciting the frantic terror which would have been the result of touching them at first. If the child died, the comforting reflection remained that it had not been terrified and tormented to no purpose.

The night-work of the hospital was conducted on the old-fashioned principle of employing paid nurses from the town, as they were wanted. Sometimes Mrs. H—— sat up for part of a night, and Sister Dora for the rest, and often, when there were no very serious cases in the wards, no night nurse was considered necessary. Each patient had within easy reach a rope, which communicated with a bell hung over Sister Dora's own bed; the slightest sound of this bell was enough to rouse her completely, and she was downstairs in a few moments.

She always felt the charge of children who were seriously hurt to be a responsibility which it was not right to shift, even for a few hours, upon the shoulders of others. She felt like a mother to them; she looked upon them while in the hospital as her own little ones, and she was unable to sleep quietly if she thought they were in pain or crying vainly for their mothers. She therefore constantly took one, sometimes two children into her own bed, and she has been known to sleep with a burnt baby on each arm. Those who have had experience of the sickening smell arising from burns will alone be able to appreciate the self-sacrifice which this must have involved. If a child was too old to share her bed she would sometimes have a cot put into her bedroom.

One day a little girl of nine years old was brought

to the hospital so badly burnt that she had plainly only a few hours to live. All pain had ceased, but the child was old enough to be terrified at the feeling of exhaustion which came on. Sister Dora at once resigned her other work into the hands of the lady-pupil and Mrs. H——, and gave herself up to soothing and comforting the dying child. She sat by the bed for some hours, talking to her in a simple way about Jesus Christ and His love for little children, and about a happy place called heaven, where she was going, and where she would never feel pain and hunger again. The child died peacefully, and her last words, suggested probably by the flowers which always stood on the ward tables, were, "When you come to heaven, Sister, I'll meet you at the gates with a bunch of flowers."

The following account was sent to me, with the subjoined little note.

"*June* 18*th*, 1879.

"DEAR MISS LONSDALE,

"I send you this as a summary of my hospital life, hoping (still doubting) it will be of service to you. And if there are any questions you think I can answer that will assist you, I will gladly do all I can.

"Yours truly,

"E. SIMPSON."

"I Enoch Simpson Working in the Iron works Pelsall Met with an accident on the eighth of May

1869 I was then about fourteen years Old there was little or no delay in conveying me to the Hospital but when I arrived there every bed was full and they were about to send me away, but Sister Dora asked to look at me and when she saw I was so badly hurt she instantly made up a bed on the floor behind the door of the then Hatherton ward. The while which I was taken in and laid on a large table and Sister Dora set a patient to watch me till she was ready then she took of my clothes and washed me then laid me in the bed she had just prepared for me, I lay their for a few days till one of the other beds was Vacant she then removed me to it, on this second bed I lay for three months attended to in all my wants by Sister Dora, from six in the morning till ten at night and often later than that and at any hour in the night she would come to me or any other patient and why Sister attended to me so early was to wash me and change my bed linen to clear away the corruption which dis-charged from my leg so that I may be clean against the Doctor came whose time was seven O'clock. And the first thing he did was to dress my leg, Sister Dora holding it up the whilst he took off the dressing and put fresh on which performance took half an hour this was the start of the day for the first three months of my Hospital life. But I had not been there above a week when Sister Dora found me a

little bell as there was not one to my bed and she said 'Enoch you must ring this when you want Sister' this little bell did not have much rest for whenever I heard her step or the tinkle of her keys in the hall I used to ring my bell, and she would call out 'I'm coming Enoch' which she did and would say 'what do you want?' I often used to say 'I don't know Sister' not really knowing what I did want. She'd say 'do you want your pillows shaking up or do you want moving a little' which she'd do whatever it was and say 'do you feel quite cosy now?' 'Yes Sister,' then she would start to go into the other ward but very often before she could get through the door I'd call her back and say my pillow wasnt quite right or that my leg wanted moving a little she would come and do it whatever it was and say 'will that do' (Yes Sister) then she'd go about her work, but at the next sound of her step my bell would ring but as often as my bell rang Sister would come, and some of the other patients would often remark that I should wear that little bell out or Sister and she'd say 'never mind for I like to hear it and its never too often' and it rang so often that I've heard Sister say that she often dreamt she heard my little bell and start up in a hurry to find it was a dream. And that lasted for three months during which time both Sister Dora and the Doctor tried all in their power and skill to cure my leg but it was no use for it

had to be taken off (or else it would have taken me off) which was done at three months to the day and almost the hour of my entrance. This is a sketch of how I consented to that operation. Sister Dora sent for my father to the Hospital he came and my oldest Brother, Sister told my father why she sent for him and asked him if he would consent he said not unless I did so she sent him to ask me and I said no he went back to Sister and told her I said no then my brother came but with the same success then Sister said she'd try and see whether I'd consent for her; she came and sat by my bed and talked to me a long time and she explained to me how near I was to death and she told me of another patient that was in at the same time as me who had a bad arm, she said that he was at death's door and that he like me was afraid of losing his limb but she had prevailed on him to consent as the only means of saving his life. She said 'look at him how nice he is a getting round' and by her persuasions I did consent and on the same day my leg was amputated. Until the end of these three months I was gradually getting weaker as I could'nt take but very little support though the daintiest bits were got for me by Sister Dora, she would come and sit by me and try to persuade me to take a little with the kindest persuasion possible and feed me with the tenderest care. At that time she used to tell my friends

that came to see me that she was going to have it advertised in the paper, a living skeleton to be seen on the premises adults Sixpence a head children half price and on one occasion she brought one of her lady friends round and when she got to me she said 'Enoch show this lady your arm' I did and the lady fainted away. But from the time my leg was taken off, I began to get better and when sufficient to allow Sister would often take me in her arms and carry me about the Hospital and say she could throw me over the moon. I was so light she used regularly to come and carry me upstairs to the first landing where she used to officiate as chaplain, so that up stairs as well as down might hear. I was there one sunday when my father and brother came to see me and when prayers were over they both offered to carry me to my bed but I told them they could'nt at the same time I was'nt above forty pounds weight they said 'who will carry you,' 'Sister,' I said. 'There' she said 'he can trust me before his father,' which undoubtedly I could for through Sisters love and care to her patients they all placed the same confidence in her, for she would lift them and move them as no one else could. And when I was sufficiently well she used to take me to St. Pauls Church on sunday in the perambulator and others as could walk she'd take. I was in the Hospital eight months on this first occasion in which time I learned to love Sister Dora as a

mother, for having none. She used to say she was my mother, but she used to say that to all of us. After attending to me first in a morning she used to fetch them water to wash, and make all the beds unless there was a patient in so bad as to need a night nurse, when she would help, after that she would serve breakfast around to us then she would have her's then prayers after which she would go round and dress all wounds ready for the Doctor to come round. In the afternoon she would attend to the outpatients, dress their wounds set a broken arm sow up a cut or draw teeth in fact any thing that was required of her she would do and always with the tenderest care and the kindest word to all. And besides all this there would often come a drunken man or woman who had been fighting and call her from her bed at all hours and often with nothing but a mere scratch, and with all that I never heard her complain any more than say 'it's too bad, is'nt it' that was only in such cases as drunken fights and not then if it was anything serious but sympathise with them and express her sorrow for them. And beside all this she used to see to the coming in and going out of every thing. When she had a bit of spare time from all this she would repair sheets, &c or cut out and make shirts for the patients or read to them or find some game of amusement or tell us a tale some times what she had witnessed in the out-patient

apartment some times some of the history of her earlier days about going a fox hunting in fact she was always studying our amusement and interest and those patients who were the most trouble she seemed the fondest of in case there were any in who were poorly off for clothing she would give them a suit when they went out. Her self denial was great for as soon as the fruit or vegetables came in season some kind friend would send some for Sister Dora then she would count her patients and measure or count the fruit or vegetable and if she found there was enough for each to have a taste she would divide it among them and go with out herself which I know has often been the case. She used also to take once a year all the patients she could and the servants, to Aston or Sutton, or some such place, at her own expence, and not only those who were then under her care but those that had been who used through their love for her to go and see her."

In one of the letters written in the early part of the year 1870 to her old friend at Little Woolston, Sister Dora says: "And so you wish me still at Woolston. I could wish myself back, to do differently; I think I could do so much better now than I did then; I have learnt more, and I think, my dear Miss F—— (I say it in all humility), I have learnt to love God more. . . . Eternity

has become so much more real. I wish I could come and sit with you for an hour, and tell you of my happy life here. It is a very busy one, but a very happy one: everybody is so good and kind, I am only afraid I shall get spoilt."

She was, fortunately, able to write and talk at the same time, or her letters would not have been written at all. Her custom was to send a convalescent patient whom she could trust, to prepare paper, ink, and pen, in her little sitting-room; then saying, "Now, nurse," or "Now, Miss ——" (as the case might be), "I'm ready," she would kneel by the table and write letters while she heard and answered questions to which she had been too busy to give her attention before. It is hardly wonderful that these letters should be short and hurried, and that they should often contain ill-expressed sentences. They do not give any just impression of her powers, and therefore, with a very few exceptions, they are not introduced into this memoir.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WORK OF THE HOSPITAL: 1870–1873.

"Get leave to work
In this world—'tis the best you get at all."

DURING the years 1870-71 Sister Dora had a strong desire to go and nurse those who were wounded in the French and German war. After much consideration, she made up her mind that her work was cut out for her at Walsall, and that she ought not to allow anything more exciting to take her away from her present duty. The following account of an ordinary day's work at Walsall Hospital, written by one of Sister Dora's lady-pupils, gives an excellent picture of what went on there:—

"Sister Dora used to come down into the wards at half-past six in the morning, make the beds of all the patients who were able to get up, and give them their breakfasts, until half-past seven, when it was time for her own breakfast. The bright, sunshiny way she always worked, with a smile and a pleasant word for every one, was in

itself a medicine of the best kind. She would quote proverbs or apt pithy sayings, and she often asked questions which would set all the men thinking—such as 'What is a gentleman?' By the time she came back into the wards, they would have their answers ready. 'To go to church with a gold watch in your pocket' constituted a gentleman, according to one man. 'To be rich and well-dressed, and have a lot of fellows under you,' was another answer. Some men were more thoughtful, and said, 'Nay; that won't make a gentleman.' But although most of them knew what a gentleman was *not,* they found a great difficulty in defining what he *was.* Then would Sister Dora, while she was dressing the wounds, or going about her work, give them her own views on the subject, and show how a man could be rich and well-dressed, and yet be no gentleman. She told me once that she often cried when she went to bed at night to think how many good words she might have spoken in season to her men. She used generally to invent some queer nickname for each of them, in order that they might (as she said) the sooner forget their former lives and associations, if those had been bad. Thus one man would always be spoken of as 'King Charles' (even having it written upon his egg for breakfast), because his face suggested Charles the First to Sister Dora. 'Darkey,' and 'Cockney,' and 'Pat,' and 'Stumpy,'

would answer to no other names. Rude, rough fellows, of course, constantly came in; nobody had ever seen such a woman as this before, so beautiful, so good, so tender-hearted, so strong and so gentle, so full of fun and humour, and of sympathy for broken hearts as well as for every other kind of fracture, and the best friend that many of these poor maimed men had ever known. She was the personification of goodness and unselfishness to them; skilful and rapid in her work, a great matter where wounds are concerned, and in a place where there was much to be done and few people to do it. After her own breakfast she read prayers on the staircase, so that all the patients in the three wards could hear and join. Then came the daily ward work—the washing of breakfast things and of patients, and the dressing of wounds. At half-past ten o'clock there were usually several out-patients, who came regularly to have their wounds poulticed or lanced, or otherwise attended to. The doctor generally appeared about eleven, and went his rounds. At twelve came the patients' dinner, at which Sister Dora attended minutely to every detail, and always carved herself. Then she read prayers in the little general sitting-room, the lady-pupils, if there were any, and the servants only attending. Then followed dinner for the nurses, a very movable feast; sometimes put off for an hour or more, and sometimes omitted altogether,

as far as Sister Dora herself was concerned, if any visitors whom she was obliged to see, or any accidents came in at that time. Out-patients, who were treated every day, began to arrive at two o'clock, and truly their 'name was legion,' when it was no uncommon event for sixty or a hundred persons to pass through the little rooms in the course of one afternoon. It was a most interesting sight to watch Sister Dora with her out-patients. They had the greatest confidence in her skill, and with good reason. All faces brightened whenever she approached; she generally knew all about them and their circumstances—had perhaps nursed some of the family before as in-patients—and she always had a word of sympathy and advice for each. The doctors got through their part of the work quickly, for they passed on to her such minor operations and dressings as are entrusted to experienced dressers in large hospitals. The setting of fractures, and even the drawing of teeth, when no surgeon was present, were common operations to her. Her bandaging was so good that a surgeon at Birmingham called upon all his students to admire, and to study as a model of excellence, the bandaging of a man's head which was her handiwork. The treatment of the out-patients often took between two and three hours, so that the in-patients' tea at five o'clock had sometimes to be prepared by the servants, when neither Sister Dora

nor her pupil could be spared. About half-past five or six the nurses had their own tea; but it was rarely that Sister Dora got a quiet meal, for either some one would come tapping at the door, saying 'she was wanted,' or the surgery bell would ring, as, indeed, it often did all day long. 'There is no peace for the wicked,' she would say, as she got up to do whatever was needed. After tea she went into the wards again, and this was the time to which her patients looked forward all day. She would go and talk to them individually, or a probationer would play the harmonium, and they would sing hymns, she joining with her strong, cheery voice, while she washed up the tea-things. Some of the patients would play at games, in which she occasionally took part. She had a way of inducing the men to wait on each other, and many of them did this, besides a great deal of work in the wards. She always had a devoted slave in some boy, whose ailments kept him a long while in the hospital. A poor diseased boy called Sam, who was about ten years old when he came, served her with preternatural quickness and intelligence. One morning his arm was so painful that instead of getting up as usual, he covered his face with the bedclothes, and sobbed as noiselessly as he could underneath them. Sister Dora was obliged that morning to fetch the various articles she needed herself—cotton, wool, syringes, bandages, ointment,

old linen, etc., which Sam usually looked out, and put in order ready for her use. 'Tell Sam I do miss him,' she said. *How* his tears ceased, and his face beamed all over with delight, when her words were repeated to him! He instantly dressed himself and ran to fulfil his daily office. He followed her about like her shadow, and was never so happy as when doing something for her. She used to amuse herself by consulting him occasionally, saying, 'Now, Doctor' (such was his nickname), 'what would you do in this case?' Sam would promptly reply, 'Iodine paint,' or 'Zinc ointment,' or whatever he thought he had observed that she used in similar cases. A boy about seventeen years of age, whom Sister Dora called 'Cockney,' because he had been 'dragged up,' as he expressed it, in London, came in with an injury to his leg from a coal-pit accident. He seemed to have no one belonging to him, and his leg was long in healing, partly because, short of strapping him down, it was impossible to keep him from hopping continually out of bed, when he ought to have been quiet. He was possessed with a spirit of fun and mischief, and would have made a capital clown in a pantomime or a circus. Jests and jokes flowed from him spontaneously on all occasions. He gave a great deal of trouble, but everybody liked him. One of the nurses whom he plagued most remarked, 'I wonder Sister Dora has not had more

influence for good over him.' After he had left the hospital, he came up one day to the out-patients' ward, and waited long for a sight of 'Sister,' saying afterwards, 'Isn't she beautiful? That is what I call a real lady.' How could any one, indeed, live with her without realizing how much there was to love and admire; and will not the recollection of her beautiful life and ministry prevent many a man from falling into 'that worst of all scepticisms, a disbelief in human goodness'? 'Cockney,' probably, will often look back with regret on the 'Christian tent,' as he called the hospital, where it was his good fortune to be taken. By eight o'clock wounds had been dressed for the night, and the patients' supper was served. Sister Dora read prayers always, even when, as sometimes happened, her many duties and labours had so delayed her that most of the patients were asleep, for she said, 'The prayers go up for them all the same.' Just before bedtime came her own supper, when she would often be very merry, and would relate her many remarkable experiences with intense fun and drollery. Her keen sense of the ridiculous must have preserved her from much weariness of spirit. This was the time to which the lady-pupils looked forward, and when they expected to enjoy themselves, but they were not unfrequently disappointed. Sister Dora would just look in at the door and say, 'I am going to bed; I don't want any supper to-night.' This

often happened on Fridays or during Lent; and how she managed to get through such constant hard work upon the very meagre diet she allowed herself, was a marvel. Her life was one long self-sacrifice. 'We *ought* to give up our lives for the brethren,' she said, and she acted upon her convictions."

Those who read this account will most likely wonder why Sister Dora did not employ more helpers, and why she should have spent her valuable time and strength in drudgery for which a probationer, if not a servant, might have sufficed. She often received remonstrances from her friends on this point, but she always remained deaf to them. She was even known to rejoice in being short of a servant, when she would cheerfully add cooking to her other labours, saying, "Servants are such plagues, I would infinitely rather do it all myself." She disliked kitchen work, and knew but little about cookery, as she used to confess with sorrow. At one time she seriously contemplated attending cookery classes at Birmingham, because she found her ignorance as to this branch of her household duties inconvenient, but leisure always failed her.

She preferred doing personally as much as possible of the work of her hospital, the chief reason for this being that activity and even restlessness of mind and body which would not allow her to be still. "She always took the heaviest and

roughest part of any employment upon herself," remarked her old servant, Mrs. H——, "and she never chose to ask her servants or lady-pupils to do anything which she was not in the constant habit of undertaking herself." She wished her own personal influence to be paramount with every in or out patient of the hospital. She was the first to be up and the last to go to rest, and she was perhaps apt to be intolerant of slowness or dulness of comprehension in others, preferring to do their work herself, rather than to wait while they got through it; she did not care to employ even a competent subordinate, and she thus thoroughly earned the title of the "one-horse Chay" given to her by Bishop Selwyn, in whose diocese Walsall lay. Between Sister Dora and our great missionary Bishop a strong fellow-feeling and sympathy existed. They were in many respects kindred spirits, and she gave him, probably, as much of her confidence as she ever gave to any one. He, in return, fully appreciated her remarkable qualities.

She was a person of strong, almost violent, prejudices, which she strove in vain not to exhibit towards her lady-pupils. When she was so inclined no one could be a more patient and a more thorough teacher; she never grudged time or attention, both of which she bestowed liberally on the pupils to whom she took a fancy. She would explain to them carefully and elaborately the why and where-

fore of everything she did, on the sole condition that they never asked her questions in the presence of the patients. Like many other people, whose own acquirements are of a first-rate order, she gave those who were her friends among her pupils, credit for more knowledge and sagacity than they really possessed—"wrapping us," says one of them, "in the warm mantle of her own great skill and knowledge."

But still, the main lesson which her lady-pupils carried away from Walsall, was not how to dress wounds or how to bandage, or even how to manage a hospital on the most popular as well as the most economical method, but rather the mighty results which the motive-power of love towards God, and, for His sake, towards mankind, might enable one single woman to effect. Sister Dora said to a friend who was engaging a servant for the hospital, "Tell her this is not an ordinary house, or even hospital; I want her to understand that all who serve here, in whatever capacity, ought to have one rule, *love for God*, and then I need not say love for their work. I wish we could use, and really mean, the word *Maison-Dieu*."

She spoke unreservedly to her household upon the absolute necessity of constant private prayer, and expressed openly her own strong conviction that no blessing could attend the hospital unless those who worked in it fulfilled their duty in this respect.

It was literally true that she never touched a wound without lifting up her heart to the Giver of all virtue, and asking that healing might be conveyed by her means; that she never set a fracture without a prayer that, through her instrumentality, the limb might unite. As she attended upon the surgeons during an operation, the most absorbing and anxious of a nurse's duties, where the patient's life must often, humanly speaking, depend on readiness of eye and instantaneous comprehension of the slightest sign on the part of the operating surgeon, and on intelligent obedience to his orders, she seemed able to separate her bodily and intellectual from her spiritual powers, which were engaged in holding communion with that Being in whose Hand are the issues of life and death.

As years passed on she became able almost to fulfil the Apostle's command, "Pray without ceasing." But the striking feature of her prayers was the strong faith which animated them. She did not pray because it was her duty, or even because she wished to fit herself to hold communion with God hereafter, but because she believed that everything she asked for would be granted to her. She firmly held to the supernatural power, put into the hands of men by means of the weapon of prayer, and the practical faithlessness in this respect of the world at large was an ever-increasing source of surprise and distress to her. She was, in fact, an

example and a living testimony to all who knew her of the efficacy of that "prayer of faith which shall save the sick;" the sick in mind and soul, as well as in body. The thought of the lives led by most of those who were brought into the hospital weighed heavily upon her mind, especially if, as was frequently the case, they were insensible from an accident, and never likely to recover consciousness. "Well," she would say, "we must pray;" and at night, when the ward was quiet, she might often be seen kneeling by the bed of some such sufferer. "These patients are my crosses," she would say; "there seems so little hope to bear one up." Her old servant, who slept in the next room to her mistress, used often to hear her praying aloud for hours at night.

The conviction grew upon her that presentiments were sent to her as direct warnings from God; and is it not possible that those who call this conviction superstitious may be condemning a childlike faith, the simplicity of which they themselves are unable to appreciate? One night Sister Dora woke up suddenly, feeling convinced that something was wrong in the wards. A serious amputation had taken place in the afternoon, but she had already visited the patient in the course of the night, according to her custom in anxious cases, and had found him going on well. But now she could not go to sleep again; something seemed

urging her to get up, and, as usual, she obeyed the warning voice within her. She went straight to the patient, and found that one of the larger arteries had broken away from its ligatures, and that he was slowly but surely bleeding to death. She secured the artery in time to save the man's life.

From the very first establishment of the regular hospital, Sister Dora had, with the permission of the surgeons, attended all post-mortem examinations, and it was in this way that she acquired her accurate knowledge of the different parts of the human body. When her friend, the old doctor of the hospital, retired, a thoroughly able man succeeded him. First under this gentleman's superintendence, and subsequently alone, Sister Dora learned to perform the minor operations upon dead subjects, and proved beyond all doubt her manual skill and dexterity. Her delicacy of touch and fine discrimination were constantly made use of by the surgeons to help them in discovering arteries which needed to be secured, and often when they had been searching in vain, she would put her sensitive finger on the right spot.

The anatomy of the eye had a special interest for her. She dissected eyes carefully, and went over to Birmingham to study cases in the Ophthalmic Hospital. Her interest in this special branch of surgery was by no means only theoretical, for at Walsall injuries to the eyes of workmen from flying por-

tions of metal, from sparks, and from small pieces of hot coal, are of common occurrence, and it was often of the utmost importance that such cases should be dealt with promptly and skilfully, even before the aid of the surgeon could be procured. It must be understood that, as there has never been a resident house-surgeon at the Walsall hospital, it became absolutely necessary that the nurse in charge of it should be able to act as a surgeon on an emergency.

Her presence at post-mortem examinations caused a remarkable reformation in the method of conducting them at Walsall. An occasion is well remembered in the early days of the hospital (when smoking was allowed in the post-mortem room), on which the surgeon made some irrelevant remark, which resulted in unseemly jokes and laughter on the part of the younger students. Sister Dora's eyes flashed, not only at the discourtesy paid to herself, but at the disrespect shown to the presence of death; however, she said nothing. The next morning, when the doctor arrived, she summoned him into her private room, and then, as he expressed it, "she let the vials of her wrath, which she had apparently been nursing all night, burst upon me." He defended himself in vain; she strode up and down the little room in a fury of anger, such as he had never seen in her before. It ended in a mutual apology, the doctor undertaking that the behaviour

of the young men should for the future be orderly and reverent. Ever afterwards, post-mortem examinations were conducted at Walsall in solemn silence, and with the same decorum which Sister Dora herself preserved in the presence of death.

She showed great care and tenderness in her own treatment of the dead, performing the necessary offices with her own hands whenever it was possible, and even devoting flowers, which would have given pleasure to her living patients, to the adornment of a corpse. This indeed was a singular fancy in which she indulged, as some of her friends thought, to excess. But the necessary familiarity with death which hospital life brings, is too apt to engender carelessness regarding the outward signs of its presence. Possibly she may have felt this tendency in herself, and therefore she determined to discourage it in every way among those around her. She would not allow a corpse to remain a moment longer in the ward than was absolutely necessary, and one of her patients has never forgotten how, when a man died in the bed next to his own in the night, Sister Dora, who was the only nurse present, took up the body in her arms with apparent ease, and carried it straight to the mortuary. The doctor under whom she worked for many years describes her physical strength as gigantic. She seemed actually to revel in the exercise of it, and to delight in testing it as severely as possible. If a huge

collier fell out of bed (not an uncommon event), she asked no one to help her, but picked him up as if he had been a baby, and put him back again. With these manifold strains on her strength, working all day, sitting up at night, taking little food, little rest, and a very rare holiday, it was impossible to discover that her health suffered.

The surgeon considered that she set all kinds of fractures better than general practitioners (probably because she had more practice), and he used to affirm that a broken thigh would most likely be better dealt with by her than by himself. A boy came up to the hospital one day, having just chopped off one of his fingers. "Where's the finger?" inquired Sister Dora. "It's at home," replied the boy. "You stupid fellow! Go and fetch it this moment, and mind you are quick!" On the production of the missing article, she set the fracture, and the surgeon bears witness that the finger healed perfectly, and became useful.

She took a peculiar delight in the mechanical part of such operations, and he well remembers her openly expressed pleasure when she first made the discovery, by means of his explanation, of the peculiar action of the muscles in the toes and fingers. "Well, now, and *isn't* that wonderful!" was her exclamation. As her knowledge of the human frame became more and more exact, her admiration and wonder, as well as her reverence for it, increased. She would have passed a first-rate examination in

surgery, and the surgeon, a Scotchman, did his best to induce her to go and study at Edinburgh, there to qualify for practice. But she shrank from the publicity of such a proceeding; and indeed, while she could practise as house-surgeon at the Walsall Hospital, she had no occasion to desire anything further in that line. Accidents on the railroad were of frequent occurrence, and the sufferers were usually brought straight to Sister Dora, so that by degrees many of the men employed upon the South Staffordshire line became her friends.

In 1871, their gratitude for her many deeds of kindness and love towards them took a practical shape, and they subscribed among themselves fifty pounds, with which they bought a small carriage and a pony. They presented their offering in the hospital grounds, which were filled with sympathizing witnesses in the shape of old patients, Sister Dora herself standing on the steps of the hospital to receive the gift. She was greatly touched by the kindness of their intention, although at first she feared that her new possession might prove a white elephant to her, and that she should never find time to use it. But many a convalescent patient was the better for it, and Sister Dora soon found that she could save herself both time and strength by using the carriage when she wanted to visit sick people at their own homes.

From the year 1870 she had no holiday for three

years, yet her health does not seem to have suffered. In 1872 the following description was written of her, by a lady who was staying in the neighbourhood of Walsall, and who had heard of the fame of Sister Dora's deeds:—

"We have been to see the celebrated Sister Dora, and I must tell you about her at once. 'Cottage Hospital' is hardly the name for it, for Walsall is an enormous place; and there are something like a score of beds, with only Sister and one paid nurse (Mrs. H——), and two or three scrubber folk, to look after them. I wish you had been with us! She is a tall, black-haired, handsome woman, brimming over with fun and energy. I think the most striking part of her is the way she picks out the humorous side of everything she tells one, and laughs over it so heartily, that the first moment I thought her unfeeling. But then the next minute she had brought tears into my eyes, and I saw that her sense of humour must be the greatest blessing and help to her in the midst of such melancholy scenes. Such things she told us! pouring them out one after another as if it were a treat to have friends to chatter to. On Saturday, at midnight, a man was brought in with his throat cut, dead to all appearance. He had cut his sweetheart's throat first, and all the doctors were with her, for he had rushed away into the fields, and had not been found for some time. So Sister Dora sewed up his

wounds as he lay in the hall, thinking that, if he were not dead, he would be in a few minutes, and it was not worth moving him. But as she finished, he began to breathe again with a gasp, and now he is likely to get well. It was curious to see how completely she had taken him under her protection, and was disposed to throw the chief blame on the girl who had jilted him. *She* is doing well, so it is not so horrible as it might have been. He is watched day and night by a policeman, and Sister Dora is so careful of his feelings, that she begs the superintendent to send them (the police) in plain clothes, and not to send again one who had not been very civil to him. He has borne an excellent character hitherto, poor man, and the stronger he grows, the more miserable he is. She told us how she had warned the other patients against gossiping about it in his presence, and smuggled away the newspapers, and coaxed away the policeman, that she might get him to herself for a while. There is quite a competition among the policemen for the hospital post. And before we had done laughing at her description of the policeman's behaviour, and of all her expedients for keeping the poor man quiet in body and mind, she burst out with a story one of the police had told her, and shed tears in telling of some deserted children who had been found almost starved in a lonely house with their dead mother. Then came a story of a child who

had been burnt the day before, while his parents were away drinking, and of another scalded child who had been brought by her mother, with the character of being 'the *nastiest* little thing ever seen' ('and, my dear,' remarked Sister Dora, 'she was possessed; I don't know how many there weren't inside her'). We saw her, with an old, unchildish face, and a doll which Sister Dora had given her because she had behaved decently for one day. In the next bed was the dearest, merriest little two-year-old broken thigh, and opposite, a poor servant-girl who had lost her leg by the old, foolish trick of playing with a gun that she thought was unloaded. She was very deaf, and when Sister Dora put her lips close to her ear, the girl threw her arm round her neck and pulled her down to kiss her, in a way that made me feel ashamed of ever having thought it possible that she could be unfeeling. I think I'll do some texts for a new ward they have just opened, by way of expressing my feelings. Oh! and she described in a most dramatic way an absurd scene when she was reading aloud a touching story. One weakly man began to cry, and a big Irishman laughed at him; he was ashamed to see a grown man cry over a book. Quoth Sister Dora, 'You'd better not say too much; it's the third time I've read it, and I'm choky myself.' A little while after, she saw the Irishman nudge his neighbour: 'I say, have you

got a handkerchief?' The man hadn't, and the reading went on, till she saw the Irishman reduced to wiping his eyes on the sheet, when she laid down the book, and they all laughed and cried together. It is nothing in the repetition, but you cannot imagine the extraordinary mixture of humour and pathos in her way of telling anything; she might have been a great novelist, I am convinced, if she had not been something better. They are advertising at Walsall for ladies to train. They had one, who afterwards took one of the Prussian hospitals in the war, and Sister Dora had a letter from the Princess of Prussia, thanking her for having sent them such a good superintendent. . . . She has not slept out of the hospital since November twelvemonth! but she looks anything rather than ill. She has been nursing eleven years. I can fancy that she would not make as good a second in command as she does chief, being human, and taking an evident pride in her own good management, which she is much too transparent and open-hearted to hide. But she is certainly as fascinating a woman as I ever came across, to use only mild language. You might as well keep this letter, please; I should like to be reminded of our visit to Sister Dora some time hence, when the impression is faded."

Such was the impression made on a total stranger by the nurse of Walsall Hospital. The young man

mentioned in this letter, who had cut his sweetheart's throat and then his own, became a *protégé* of Sister Dora, and she took his part so completely, that if he had not been watched too closely to make it possible, she would have connived at his escape from justice. He was condemned to a term of imprisonment, during which she wrote to him constantly, begging him to behave well and to avoid bad company, promising when he should leave the prison to lend him a helping hand.

CHAPTER V.

FIRST MISSION AT WALSALL AND SMALL-POX EPIDEMIC: 1873–1875.

"Appicar chi vuol' il sonaglio à la gatta?"

In 1873 Sister Dora writes to a friend who had asked her for her opinion on woman's work:—"I feel pretty much like Balaam of old, as if I should give quite the contrary advice to what you wanted of me; to wit—you would like me to urge women working in hospitals, etc., etc. I feel more inclined to harangue about women doing their work at *home,* being the helpmeet *for* man, which God ordained, and not doing *man's* work. Then, when they have faithfully fulfilled their home duties, instead of spending their time in dressing, novel-reading, gossiping, let them spend and be spent. . . . I feel sure there would be more work done, and less talk, if we thought of laying it on the sure foundation. But a great deal is built on 'stubble and hay,' and will have to be burnt. Another thing we lose sight of is the privilege

of working. Oh, ——, my heart runs over with thankfulness that I have been allowed to minister, even in a little way, to His sick and suffering! I feel, when I touch them, as if virtue came out of them. Don't you often feel as if you grudged the time you are obliged to spend in sleep, and in recruiting the body? there seems so much work to be done. I think it will be a sharp pang to us to see what little use we have made of it, what souls we might have turned, what a powerful weapon we had in prayer, and how seldom we wielded it."

In the month of March of that year, a mission was held at Walsall, in which Sister Dora, who never thought she had enough to do, could not resist taking an active part. She went to the opening meeting. The missioner, in his address to lay-workers, exhorted them to bring people to the services which were to be held during the week. The next night Sister Dora came into the little sitting-room at the hospital, with her bonnet and cloak on, announcing that she was going to catch waifs and strays, and drag them to church, but that her heart failed her. "Perhaps I shall be snubbed." "*That* is no matter," remarked a lady-pupil to whom she spoke, and she started on her mission. When she came back she was radiant. She had met with only one rebuff, and had arrived in church with a

following of thirty or forty people. "But," she said, "I stopped and asked a man and a woman who were talking together to come with me. The man sneered and swore at me; the woman said, '*You* may go to the devil if you like,' and came with me to Christ." This was the first active mission work, not directly connected with her patients, which Sister Dora undertook.

In September she had a few days' holiday, and went to see the autumn manœuvres, which took place upon Cannock Chase. She writes: "I have gone—like every one else—mad on the autumn manœuvres. 'I have been there, and still would go.'" She enjoyed herself like a child let out of school, and was specially amused when a soldier put out his shoulder, and had it put right again in a very bungling fashion. "Why, I could have done that better," she said. In October she had a short but sharp attack of fever, caught in nursing a very bad case; from which, however, she recovered quickly and completely, for she writes soon after that she has the hospital "full of interesting cases: one man with a compound fracture of each leg, and no less than thirty cuts on his head."

During one of her visits to Redcar, the date of which it is difficult to discover, Sister Dora was one day bathing in the sea. As she was swimming and diving with her usual vigour and enjoyment, she saw suddenly that a woman who had been

bathing near her had gone out of her depth, and was struggling in the water. Sister Dora immediately swam out to her, and tried to bring her to shore; but the woman had lost all self-control, and clung so frantically to her friend, that they were both in serious danger of being drowned. Sister Dora, however, contrived to hold her up, until by her cries for help she had attracted the notice of a gentleman on the beach, who threw himself into the water, and managed to save both the women.

In August, 1874, she took her well-earned holiday, going to Redcar, and there joining one of her sisters with her children. From this place she writes to a friend: "A retreat for clergy is being held now, so the place is swarming with the black petticoats. I could fill you sheets about the Archbishops' Bill, and the state of the Church. Newspapers dabble in theology too much. What I detest is, the Ritualists playing at Rome—picking up the shell of things, without knowing the why and wherefore; calling themselves a *Catholic* Church, and yet speaking of a *Catholic party* in *the* Church." She looked upon the Ritualistic movement with unfeigned astonishment, not unmixed with amusement. Her own religion was eminently spiritual, and she was a lover of all goodness, no matter in what form it was expressed. She was attached by the bond of education, as

well as by hereditary affection, to the Church of England, but her excitable temperament led her occasionally to desire something more stirring and rousing in religious worship than the sober services of her Church. Mr. Twigg used to hold prayer-meetings at Wednesbury, and she was delighted whenever she was able to attend them. His teaching was exclusively and strictly Church of England, but he did not disdain to borrow from nonconformists those valuable methods of appeal to the heart and the imagination whereby they contrive to make religion acceptable to the uneducated. Sister Dora's sense of the ludicrous was often roused, however, by what went on at these prayer-meetings. She had names for all the performers at them; and those who have heard her describe the proceedings, especially remember her account of one man, who was wont to give vent so vigorously to his feelings, that she called him "Blow ye the trumpet." When Messrs. Moody and Sankey came to Birmingham, Sister Dora, who was always anxious to try anything new, especially if it were in the sensationally religious line, went to hear them preach. She came back full of their praises, and introduced their hymn-book into her wards. The patients, led by her, learnt to sing the hymns, and many a Sunday afternoon was spent happily in this manner, by past and present inmates of the hospital.

These Sunday afternoons are spoken of by many railway servants, cabmen, and others, with expressions of almost passionate gratitude and regret. The old patients came up to the afternoon service, performed by a clergyman, in the hospital. When that was over, Sister Dora began herself to teach, and to draw practical lessons for their benefit from various texts of Holy Scripture. Sometimes she only reproduced what she had heard at Wednesbury, but more often she launched forth into comments upon the Bible, drawn from the stores of her original mind. When people asked her wonderingly how she could do it, how she found anything to say, and how she made the men listen to her, she would answer them by a reference to the words used in the parable of the good Samaritan, when he finds the sick man—"he came where he was." "I try to put myself in the place of these poor men, to see with their eyes, and to feel their wants and their difficulties as if they were my own, and then God puts into my heart the words which will reach their hearts." This was her own simple description of the way in which she tried to win souls; and this is surely the reason why she succeeded in her efforts. For instance, she would read slowly, interspersing it with comments, the description of our Lord's birth at Bethlehem, pausing at the words, "There was no room for Him in the inn." These she would

make the text of her lesson, comparing the crowded inn to the hearts of her hearers, illustrating, by the power of her vivid imagination, the condition of those hearts, and the various reasons why Jesus Christ could find no resting-place in them. In nearly every case she knew the personal character and special needs of those whom she addressed, and her very words are remembered, and still quoted, by those for whom they were intended.

The study of Holy Scripture was a habit of her life. She always carried in her pocket a small Bible; and its well-worn leaves, and in many places the thickly written marginal notes, amply testify that she used it constantly. Once, during the short attack of fever already mentioned, one of her lady-pupils went up to her bedroom to receive orders from her, and found her reading the Bible. "I was struck," says this pupil, "with the expression on her face; it is indescribable, but it was like nothing I had ever seen on a human face before—'unearthly' is the word I must use for it." The trials to which lady-pupils subjected Sister Dora were innumerable. Those only who have had to deal with the teaching of women of all ages, from the middle and upper classes, who take to nursing the sick, either because they have had a matrimonial disappointment, or because they cannot get on at home, and think the air of a hospital may agree with their temper, or because they want

something to do, or lastly, perhaps the best reason of all, because they honestly want to earn their living, and having little or no education, they do not see their way to obtaining it by any other means, those alone can tell what Sister Dora had to endure. But without some help she could not always have worked the hospital, and occasionally she got an efficient pupil, really fitted for the occupation, in whose charge she was able to leave the patients for a day or two, while she made a short holiday. She dealt pretty severely with any signs of fine-ladyism; she used to say, "What on earth does the woman mean by coming here, then!" She took a mischievous delight in giving "airified" or dainty pupils, some particularly unpalatable piece of work to perform in the out-patients' ward, watching them meanwhile out of the corners of her eyes, and enjoying their embarrassment. She preserved a strictly professional manner, whether on duty with the surgeons or while giving instructions to the probationers, her jokes and fun being reserved entirely for the patients, or as a dainty dish for the private consumption of the nurses at their meal-times.

Her manner with the lady-pupils was short, and her words concise; she gave her orders clearly, expecting to be understood the first time, and not to be obliged to repeat them. Her directions about dressing wounds were constantly accompanied by

the exhortation, "*Mind* you do not waste anything." She governed the hospital on the strictest principles of economy, and she was proud at one time to find that she had reduced the expenditure to thirty-four pounds a bed per annum. In fact, it became the most cheaply managed surgical hospital in the United Kingdom. This distinction she doubtless owed to her personal supervision of minute details, and to her confirmed habit of trusting no one but herself. The result proved the value of the "one-horse chay" principle with which some, who did not know its worth, were disposed to find fault.

In the autumn of 1874 she took a number of convalescent patients to the seaside for a few weeks, and she thus writes to a former lady-pupil, by whose kindness the necessary funds for the expedition had been supplied:—"Rhyll, October 5th, 1874. I have been wishing that you could see our happy party here. I do not know when *I* have enjoyed anything so much. So far it has been a great success; the patients are gaining daily health and strength. We have got such capital lodgings, the drawing-room and dining-room so large and well-furnished, excellent bed-rooms, and such a capital landlady. Instead of disliking us, she is so good to the patients, takes such pains with the cooking. The clergyman has been kind, and several ladies, lending us things, and inter-

esting themselves in us. Only one of the patients had seen the sea before, and that for a day. Their remarks are so amusing; it *is* such fun to me. I took them out in a boat. . . . They are never tired of the shore, never come in before eight at night, and are out in the morning at seven. Our family ranges from two years old to the grey-headed man of sixty! I take the little child out, and let it run without its shoes or stockings. I am so grieved that I did not have them weighed when we came. One boy had an awful knee, limped when he came, and to-day he was running races. Another had a weak arm, and could not cut his meat; now he can do it well. There is a very nice church, daily evensong. It is a little late, but I could not manage to come sooner, and we should not have got our lodgings so reasonably. Very few patients in the hospital now. . . ." Such an expedition as she here describes was seldom possible, on account of expense; but nearly every year, and sometimes oftener, Sister Dora gave her patients a treat.

One of her married sisters writes: "In the autumn of 1874, Dora visited me here (in Guernsey), at my urgent request. My eldest daughter was just on the eve of marriage, and dear Dora assisted us very much in the preparations. She wished very much to remain for the wedding, which was to take place on October 5th, but was

hurried away a few days previously by some business at Walsall connected with that visit to Rhyll. She promised us all, however, to return for the wedding, if it were possible to find some one to fill her place. Whilst here, she went with me everywhere; she visited my poor patients in their homes, and, as it seemed to me, healing dropped from her fingers. No one in our little village will forget that visit, nor her rich voice in church.

"We were very much occupied at the time, but she threw herself into all that was doing with such interest and energy, that it was hard to believe that her own actual life was passed in scenes of suffering and pain. She was as earnest as any of us in the preparation of the trousseau, and superintended the trying on of the wedding dress with a girl's zest. Her absence seemed to us the great disappointment of that wedding day."

On one occasion she took seven or eight boys, all of whom had suffered surgical operations, to Sutton Park, in the neighbourhood of Walsall. Her joy at the sight of the children's pleasure was boundless. When the time arrived for them to pack into the hired carriage and drive home, they all gathered round her, each boy begging to be allowed to sit beside her. Her ready tact, even in so very small a matter, was noticed by those who had been helping to entertain the boys. She contrived to satisfy them all. Two

boys were to sit on either side of her, one because he was the youngest and might get hurt, the other because he had been the last to be operated upon! Two elder boys were told, as a great honour, that they might sit by the driver, and a third was trusted to take care that a weakly companion was not too much squeezed. "This readiness to meet all requirements will be remembered by those who saw much of her," says one who knew her well.

Sometimes she took a whole army of followers, patients, night-nurses, and humble friends, over to Lichfield for the day, to see the cathedral and attend the service. She bore most of the expense of these expeditions herself. No one ever knew what her income really was; but at her father's death, his property, which was considerable, had been divided among his children; and, besides this, each of the Pattison sisters had inherited some small sum from a relation who had died before Mr. Pattison. Money was valuable to her only that she might spend it on others, and as, to use her own words, she "had neither time nor inclination to inquire about investments," she put her property into the hands of a thoroughly trustworthy solicitor, who managed it entirely for her. Her charity was widely distributed, but nobody, except a few friends, through whose hands her money passed, knew the extent of her liberality. She considered

that old patients had the first claim upon her; those especially whom she had induced to lead respectable lives, and whom circumstances were dragging down in spite of their efforts. These she would help to emigrate, with their families, sometimes giving, sometimes lending them the necessary money.

A physician living in the neighbourhood, who was intimate with her, writes:—"In several cases of sad suffering Sister Dora asked my help, and often assisted such, by finding temporary homes, and paying for them out of her private means. Servants worn down by sickness, governesses, and others who were dependent for their living on their own exertions, were often provided for. I have been asked by her to procure lodgings for such at Sutton, and to give them medical supervision, and I generally had a commission, when they left, to pay their expenses and to charge them to her. She received many letters from old patients, who were doing well in life, thanking her for her kindness towards them, and wishing they could ever hope to return, in any way, the blessings she had showered upon them. She invariably destroyed such letters, and there is not one of them to be found among her papers.

Towards the end of 1874 she became anxious to establish, if possible at the seaside, a convalescent home in connection with the hospital. She was

constantly forced to send away patients who still required care, good nourishment, and, above all, pure air to complete their cure, in order to make room for fresh and urgent cases. Above all, the children, for whose ailments sea-air is nearly a panacea, weighed upon her mind. She writes to a former lady-pupil, the same who helped the patients to a seaside trip, and who was always ready to do her utmost for Walsall:—"You have more time and brains than I have; I should be so grateful if you could draw up something definite about the Convalescent Home." There were great difficulties in the way of this project—so great, that it was never carried into effect; and now one of the proposed monuments to Sister Dora's memory is the Convalescent Home which she had so much at heart.

Up to the year 1874 she had been able to transfer cases which most needed the help of pure air, to the Convalescent Home at Coatham, attached to the Sisterhood of which she herself was a member; but towards the end of that year all connection between Sister Dora and the Community of the Good Samaritans was finally dissolved. A friend, who questioned her as to her reasons for leaving the Sisterhood, had for answer, "I am a woman, and not a piece of furniture!" The committee of the hospital received an official communication from head-quarters at Coatham,

desiring that the Sisterhood might no longer be considered responsible for the nursing at Walsall. The committee, in their turn, formally requested the Sister to take this work upon herself. She had done this, practically, for some years, and it will be readily understood that she made no difficulty in agreeing to their proposition.

In November, 1874, Sister Dora heard of the death of a dearly loved sister, who left a husband and a large family of children. During several weeks she was in a state of anxious hesitation, whether her duty did not lie henceforth with her sister's children in Yorkshire, and some letters written at this time show the severe struggle through which she passed, in deciding between inclination and duty. For Walsall, with its smoky chimneys and roaring furnaces had become far dearer to her than even the moors and the streams of her Yorkshire birthplace, and the uncouth inhabitants of the Black Country seemed nearer to her heart than her own flesh and blood. Was she to give up the exercise of all her vast influence, and to leave the souls whom she was guiding along the new and difficult path, into which, perhaps, no hand but her own could have led them,—was she to turn her back on those whom she still hoped to win to follow her, while she went to teach and watch over a family of children, a task which any other woman might have performed as well?

She writes: "I cannot make up my mind to give up all this work and go to them. I am afraid it is all selfishness on my part which makes me hesitate; no one knows what it will cost me to give up this work, home, friends, and go to that barren moor." Again, a month later: "I should have made my decision by now if it had depended on myself alone, but I have others to please. The thought of leaving has given me an impetus, and stirred me up to work more earnestly. Everything seems to have grown dearer." She had actually laid her resignation before the committee (causing the doctor to threaten that he would "go and lay his head under a railway train at once"), but she withdrew it, and finally made up her mind to leave the decision to others. It was eventually determined that her work ought not to be interfered with, and so she remained at Walsall. But, as she herself said, it appeared that the mere idea of resigning her work had stirred her up to make new efforts, and to become, if it were possible, more self-denying, more untiring in her labours, more active and zealous than before, in winning souls for the service of the Master to whom all her own powers were dedicated. Although she preferred to do the work within the walls of the hospital almost single-handed, she now began to do her utmost to stir up others to become labourers for the same end and in the same cause which she had herself so much at heart.

Some of the clergy in Walsall, with whom temptation to faint-heartedness, from the seeming failure of their efforts, must have been at times difficult to resist, bear testimony to the fact that her example was strangely infectious, and that the sight of her cheerful perseverance often encouraged them. It is not too much to say, that after this winter of 1874 she was never weary of making almost superhuman efforts to raise the souls and heal the bodies of her fellow-creatures—that her love never cooled, her zeal never flagged, for a single hour. To remonstrances from her friends, who said that if she never allowed herself a moment's rest, her strength must fail, her only answer was, "It is better to wear out than to rust out." People who were ill or in trouble, no matter who or what they might be, were in the habit of sending for "Sister," as if they thought that she had nothing else to do but to nurse or comfort them. And, indeed, she contrived to convey to every one this impression while she was employed on outside missions, and her manner was quite as sympathizing and her help quite as efficient as if she had not left her work at the hospital accumulating during her absence. Such calls came upon her in various ways, but she always looked upon them as direct intimations from God Himself that she was to come forward as His messenger and minister.

Thus she heard that through the misconduct of the head of the household, grievous trouble had fallen on a family whom she had known for some years, but their position in life was such that it was a delicate matter for her to approach them in their distress. An open breach between husband and wife was said to be imminent. "Will nobody heal this up?" Sister Dora exclaimed; "then let me try what I can do." She went to the poor wife, and by her gentle sympathy and wise counsel induced her to forgive the wrong done by her husband, and thus peace was restored. Again, one of the sons of a family known to the writer had married a wife, who, in the opinion of his parents, was likely to prove a heavy drag on his advancement in life, and a serious hindrance to him in the path of duty. His profession, however, took him to Walsall, and there his wife became acquainted with Sister Dora, who tried to set before the thoughtless girl a new view of life, inspired her with some of her own zeal for helping others, and then provided her with opportunities for satisfying her newly roused energies. Thus the whole family reaped the benefit of Sister Dora's earnest sympathy and skilful management, and, to use their own words, the son's wife "became an altered creature from the time she knew that wonderful woman."

It would be impossible to recount the tenth part of the instances in which she ministered to the

needy, the desolate, the sinful, the sorrowful, the helpless, and the broken-hearted. "Fetch Sister Dora," was the invariable cry, and she never failed to respond to it. No wonder that her work seemed ever increasing and widening with her growing knowledge of human nature, and with the cultivation of her own powers. But it was the poor and ignorant amongst whom she most delighted to work; with them lay her largest sympathies, and by her intercourse with them she refreshed her own spirits, and brightened her life. She brought back many an amusing account of her adventures from her visits to the low lodging-houses, whither she was occasionally summoned, sometimes to set a limb broken in a drunken brawl, sometimes to dress the burns of a scalded child.

At one time Sister Dora paid regular visits to a woman called Betsy, who had a very bad leg. One afternoon she went down the court where this woman lived, and knocked as usual at her door, but could get no answer. A crowd collected, and her ears were saluted by ironical cries of "Betsy's gone out on a visit." "Oh, she's staying with friends. I'll tell you all about it, Sister." At last Sister contrived to make out that Betsy, finding her leg better, had taken a walk down the nearest street, and had passed a shop where hung displayed a pair of trousers, whose attractions proved too much for her honesty. She looked up and down the street,

and seeing no one, possessed herself of the coveted garments. But a little boy watched her, and a policeman was fetched, who took her off to the lock-up. "So you'll find her there, Sister. *She thought nobody had seen her.*"

Sister Dora looked at the miserable crowd, and felt it was too good an opportunity to be lost. She spied an empty cart, and in a moment she had mounted it, and was telling them the old story of the man who went into a cornfield with his son, and after having looked to the right and the left, and before and behind him, told his son he might pick corn, for there was nobody to see him. "Father," the boy said, "there was one way you didn't look; you didn't look up." "Now, friends," added the Sister, "if Betsy had looked *up* she wouldn't have taken those trousers." Then she stepped out of the cart, went off to the lock-up, and told Betsy the same story.

In the early part of February, 1875, a fresh outbreak of small-pox occurred in the town of Walsall; and, as on its former appearance in 1868, so now it spread with frightful rapidity. At the close of the last visitation the mayor and corporation of Walsall had caused an Epidemic Hospital to be built on the outskirts of the town, in order that it might be ready for any emergency. It had been already opened once, or more than once, during scarlet-fever visitations, which threatened to prove

nearly as fatal to the inhabitants as small-pox. But it was found to be a matter of insuperable difficulty to induce the poor to send their cases of fever to the special hospital, and thus to arrest the spread of infection. "They would far rather die at home. They were not afraid. Why could they not be let alone?" was their answer to all appeals put before them on public grounds, and for the welfare of the town at large, to make use of the house of refuge provided for them—an answer by which, after the manner of Englishmen, they thought to show their independence. Hence the Epidemic Hospital threatened to remain a standing monument of ill-applied energy on the part of the corporation.

In this dilemma Sister Dora came to their rescue. She had privately made up her mind during the last small-pox visitation that the disease should never again be allowed to make ravages among the population, if by any means she could prevent it. When, therefore, she found that an epidemic was inevitable, and that people were concealing their cases lest they should be forced to send them away, she wrote to the mayor, urging upon him the necessity of opening the Epidemic Hospital without delay, and offering to leave her own work and nurse the small-pox patients for any length of time which might be necessary. Her offer was joyfully accepted. The authorities knew only too well, by sad experience, the terrible calamity from which

her unselfish devotion would save their town. They were well aware that the mention of Sister Dora's name in connection with the Epidemic Hospital would be enough to make everybody not only willing, but anxious, to send their relations to be nursed there. In the dire emergency of the moment it was impossible to hesitate to save the town from the impending calamity, even at the risk of so valuable a life as Sister Dora's.

The only consideration which disturbed her mind was the question what, in the mean while, was to become of the Cottage Hospital. Three lady-pupils, however, happened to be there in course of training, one of whom she knew was capable of almost as much work as herself, and would do her utmost to fill the vacant place. Of the other two, one was quite young, and both were beginners. The hospital happened to be full of more or less serious cases, such as ordinarily Sister Dora would have trusted to no care but her own. Still, the greater the difficulties, the more she seemed to be drawn towards the new work which offered itself to her. Other people could, and would, work the Cottage Hospital under the superintendence of the surgeon while she was away. But no one else could fill "Sister's" place to the unhappy small-pox victims; and she felt a conscious pride that, let the mayor and corporation send for all the trained nurses in England, let them pay fabulous salaries

to hired servants, let them even bribe the inhabitants to use the Epidemic Hospital, all would be in vain; while in her own name there lay a charm to which the masses of Walsall would yield without a moment's hesitation. Was it in human nature not to feel proud of having won such a position among her fellow-men? "Sister is going to the Epidemic Hospital," was the sentence in everybody's mouth.

They had little opportunity to think about it, for before the first expression of wonder was over, she was established in her new position. She left the Cottage Hospital pretty much to take care of itself; no special orders were given to the nurses, nor was any one of them actually placed in charge. She merely told her pupils that they must divide the work, and try to do their best till she returned. This characteristic proceeding on her part caused a want of harmony among her substitutes, from which she might easily have saved them. But—must it be told?—the position she had won for herself, had fostered a not altogether unnatural sense of pride, which made her desire, although she could not be in two places at once, that no one else should, even temporarily, be entitled to occupy her place. This feeling must be called by its right name, jealousy, which may well appear unworthy of the rest of her nature; but the story of her life will have been told to

little purpose, if any one is thereby led to suppose that it holds up a piece of perfection for their admiration. It may be that when frail mortals fight desperate battles in the open field, from which they come off triumphant, but with bleeding wounds whose soreness will last for their lifetime, that they are all the more liable to yield, in another direction, to a subtle, hidden enemy, whose darts are nevertheless poisoned. Those who, having never fought at all, are content to watch others struggling, and with arms folded to criticize their method of warfare, may condemn Sister Dora for what they may stigmatize as a mean fault. She was like a man who, with his front always to the foe, with all his faculties on the alert, parries and returns active thrusts; but who does not perceive until too late an ambushed enemy, who glides out of the thicket behind him and deals him a disabling wound.

It is only too true that Sister Dora and her work in Walsall suffered from her constant tendency to yield to an unworthy dislike of those who showed symptoms of ability to fill, in any degree, her place there. Most probably she was unaware of the extent of her own failing in this respect. But it certainly caused her to gather around her second and third, and even fourth rate workers, from whom it was impossible to choose when a substitute was wanted. She need

not have feared a comparison; she must always have remained unrivalled in the combination of physical and mental qualities, which formed, after all, one of the main grounds of her distinction.

She went to the Epidemic Hospital, knowing that she would, in all probability, again fall a victim to the small-pox, for her tendency to catch every complaint to the infection of which she was exposed had not forsaken her. She went, too, with a conviction that she should never return to her work. But for once her presentiment was destined to prove false.

CHAPTER VI.

LIFE IN THE EPIDEMIC HOSPITAL: 1875.

" . . . . Does it seem a bitter thing
To tend the sick, to cheer the comfortless,
To serve God ever, and to watch and pray,
Because thou must be lonely? The bright sun
Goes on rejoicing in his loneliness;
And yon meek moon rides through the dark blue vault,
Unmated in her nightly wanderings.
Nor deem thy life shall be uncomforted.
Flowers bloom along the way that Duty treads,
And as thou goest on thy stern, high path,
Glimpses will come to thee of heavenly joys
Transcending all the base world reckons of."

If you drive down from the hill, on which the Cottage Hospital stands, in a north-westerly direction, and go on, seemingly for ever, through dirty, dreary streets and lanes, the abodes of poverty, disease, and wickedness, until you leave even these signs of human habitation behind you, and pass along a road with heaps of "slag," the refuse of the iron furnaces, looking like gigantic oyster-shells, adorning it on either side, you arrive at length at the Epidemic

Hospital. It seems the end of the earth, and you look back upon smoky Walsall with its crowning church-steeple and teeming inhabitants as from a desert land. The hospital stands in the midst of the above-mentioned heaps of "slag," which are rendered unwholesome and robbed of their sole recommendation, purity, by the use made of them as dust-heaps for the neighbouring population. The scum of this population are the only living beings to be seen, and they are diving into the masses of foul rubbish for the purpose of collecting rags; their own clothing, of the scantiest possible description, looking as if it had been derived from the same source. The hospital is a long low building of one story, forming two sides of a square, with its entrance in the angle. In front about a quarter of an acre of ground is planted with cabbages for the use of the patients, and these dismal-looking rows of blackened vegetables seem to add to the desolation of the scene. Not a tree or a bush stands up against the sky, and the ancient heaps of powdered slag hide from view even the neighbouring collieries and the undulating lines of the distant hills of Cannock Chase.

To this place, on a February afternoon, Sister Dora was escorted by her friend, the surgeon of the Cottage Hospital, who was also medical officer to the Board of Health, and therefore responsible for the management of the Epidemic Infirmary. As she stood on the doorstep she shivered, for the first

and only time in her life, with an irrepressible dread of the lonely struggle with disease which she was going to encounter. Her courage failed her for the moment, and she exclaimed, "Oh, take me back! I cannot endure this dreadful place! I had no idea what it would be like when I said I would come here." The surgeon knew her well, and took the right method of dealing with her. He only said, "Come in." The instant diversion of her ideas was successful, and nobody having a practical knowledge of the subject could fail to be delighted with the internal arrangements of the building.

It is enough to say here, for the enlightenment of the uninitiated, that for its purpose nothing can be better planned. The wards, only two in number, are entirely bare; large and lofty, and capable of division by means of sliding doors, so that bad cases can be isolated. The windows are not large, and are barred with iron, a necessary precaution in the case of delirious patients. The ventilation is contrived from the roof, on an excellent principle invented by the surgeon, which must be seen to be understood. Two large day-rooms, which may be converted into wards for convalescents, are designed chiefly to afford plenty of space for the separation of slight from severe cases; a good kitchen, a sitting and bed room all in one for the nurse, and another room just large enough to hold a bed and nothing more, for the porter, together with a small dispen-

sary, complete the internal arrangement. Entirely separate, stand a good laundry, a mortuary, a disinfecting oven, and a stable which contains an ambulance. Sister Dora was enchanted, and like a child began to rejoice in her new and strange position, deploring that the building would altogether spoil her for the Cottage Hospital; that she had never seen a place where work would be more delightful, and so on, quite forgetting the dreariness of her first impression.

Her work began at once. The hospital contained twenty-eight beds, and many of them were soon filled with patients in every stage of the disease. The only help she had was from the porter, an old man, who was attentive and kind in his way, but who occasionally went off "on the drink" for the whole night, leaving her positively alone with the dead and dying. Two old women came in from the workhouse to share with her the loathsome washing of clothes and bedding. On the first Sunday which she spent in her new abode, she wrote as follows to one of the ladies whom she had left in the Cottage Hospital:—

"*February 28th.*

"My dear Sister,

"I have been wondering how you are getting on. I was glad to hear that you had been to church. I hope you had a nice little sermon from Mr. Fitzgerald, and that you thought of me. Have

you missed me? Don't neglect mid-day prayer, and *do* get all you want for your meals. Don't have any trouble that you do not tell me. Suffer nothing from ——; she has a place to go to, and she can go rather than that you should be annoyed. How is Miss —— getting on? Remember me to her, and tell her not to work *too* vigorously, as new brooms are apt to do, and then in consequence they flag. I should do very well if 'my cross' had not flitted with me too, namely, the servants. The old Irish-woman, sixty-seven! who shouts at the patients, and is a regular old Sarah Gamp and Grimes, who cannot crawl, and is so dirty. If only S—— would have come, I should have done. My room is between the wards, with little windows as you have, peeping into both. My bed in one corner, chest of drawers, and slip for my basin. The doctor said it 'smelt of pox' this morning; and no wonder—they were airing all the sheets by my fire when I came in. I think the most infectious thing I have to do is to nurse the babies, taking them streaming out of their mothers' arms. One has the pox on its arms and chest very slightly. Our worst case is a lad of eighteen. He vomits everything, and is so delirious; he got out of his bed this morning, and I thought he had escaped into the town, but I found him in an empty ward. All the patients are *alive!* but that is generally the case with small-pox and dirty people. I could only venture to wash their hands and faces in hot water

this morning. I have had to make garments for my urchins to-day; it is very difficult to get anything here. Everything has to be ordered at the Town Council office. I see —— is timid! He kept a respectful distance to-day from me and the patients, but do not tell him I said so. . . . I am going to send a letter to the patients, which you are to read to them, and you must tell me what they say. As I read the prayers this morning I saw the tears roll down one woman's face, who I know is living in sin with a man I have nursed. There is not one case in who does not know me. One of the police came to see me to-day, and he said they declared in the town they should not mind having the small-pox with 'Sister' to nurse them. I declare I taste it in my tea. I have made my room look as respectable as I can. . . . Is not this a glorious retreat for me in Lent? I can have no idle chatter.

"With love,

"SISTER DORA."

The letter to which she refers is directed "For the Patients;" it is characteristic, for it shows the terms she was upon with them.

"MY DEAR CHILDREN,

"What did you say to your mother running away? I dared not tell you, and I could not trust myself to come and wish you good-bye, for I

felt it too much. You know how I love you all and care for you, and it is for this very love that I have left you. The small-pox was spreading in the town, and might have spread to your wives and families; the patients would not come to this hospital until they heard I would nurse them, and then they were all willing to come. There is not one who has come in who does not know me. I have got a lad here who is always wanting something, just to keep me by his side. Tell my Irish friend in the corner that I have a countrywoman of his, and she is the plague of my life. Tells such accounts of cases of small-pox as would make your hair stand on end—how a cat can take it from one ward to another. Tell John Dawson that to-morrow afternoon Sister must give him some paper, and he is to write me a letter, with a message from each of my children, and with it to send word how his foot is. Remember me to Isaac; he is not to leave the 'Darkey' too much. 'Everlasting' is not to dance about. 'Delicate man' is to tell me how he sleeps, and if he does not miss me to arrange his leg and look after him. Tell my Irishman I miss his blessing—the man by the door; I will soon come and starch him (*i.e.* his leg). Mr. Baker, I hope, is attentive to his duties, and has broken no more pink cups. I hope 'Leg' is getting on grandly, not sitting up too long; 'King Charles' brushes his hair with care, 'Head' is better, 'Burnt' misses me, 'Hand' is better,

'Thumb' easier, Michael as content as ever. What shall I say to my beloved Sam? I wish I had my boy here. I send him twenty kisses, and hope he has been in church to-day, and in time. He must not sulk all the time I am away. I have two blessed babies who alternately keep up music all day and night, accompanied with my Irishwoman's tongue, so I am not dull. Have you been singing to-day? You must sing particularly 'Safe in the arms of Jesus,' and think of me. Living or dying, I am His. Oh, my children, you all love me for the very little I do for you; but oh, if you would only think what Jesus has done, and is doing for you, your hearts would soon be full of love for Him, and you would all choose Him for your Master. Now, whilst you are on your beds, read and study His life; see the road He went, and follow Him. I know you all want to go to heaven, but wishing will not get you there. You *must* choose *now* in this life, you cannot choose hereafter when you die. That great multitude St. John saw round the throne *had* washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, which was shed for each one of you. God loves you; I know it, by His letting you get hurt and bringing you to the hospital. 'As many as I *love*, I rebuke and *chasten*.' Think over these things, my dear children. Your mother is thinking of you and praying for you. And if it please God you should never see her again, will you

make up your minds to walk in the narrow way, so that we may all meet in the green fields above? May God bring you all safe there is the earnest prayer of your faithful friend,

"SISTER DORA."

She was not without visitors in her lonely situation. The doctor, of course, was obliged to be constantly in attendance, but besides him the Secretary of the Cottage Hospital loved her well enough to give this undoubted proof that he was ready at any time to lay down his life for her. He went constantly to see how she was, and whether he could do anything for her. He brought her not only news of her beloved patients, but books, flowers, or anything that he thought might serve to give her a moment's pleasure. Her old patients, too, did not desert her. A man called Chell, an engine-stoker, whose own words about her are, "I could not tell you all her goodness to me, words would fail me if I tried," went constantly to see her after his work was done.

A few words will explain why this young man was Sister Dora's devoted servant, though no doubt she often did for others as much as she had done for him. He had been twice in the hospital under her care. The first time he came with his ankle put out, and severely grazed. She made him come up every night, always dressing the wound herself,

although she often had to keep him waiting so long, that, as she told him, she was quite ashamed. "Never mind," she said; "but when you want a character for patience, come to me and I'll give you one." His ankle was scarcely healed when he was brought one night with his leg crushed to pieces in a railway accident. It was amputated, and Chell was fifteen weeks in the hospital. He says he remembers nothing about the operation except that Sister Dora was there, and that "when I come to after the chloroform she was on her knees by my side, with her arm supporting my head, and she was repeating—

> 'They climbed the steep ascent of heaven
> Through peril, toil, and pain;
> O God, to us may grace be given
> To follow in their train;'

and all through the pain and trouble that I had afterwards, I never forgot Sister's voice saying those words." The poor fellow had reason to remember them, for he had to suffer yet another operation before his leg healed, and then he was sent to a Convalescent Home.

Before he left the hospital she gave him a pocket-book, in which she wrote down three resolutions which he made: 1. Come to see Sister Dora once a month; 2. Will go to church more regularly; 3. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." She had taken him to

church with her, and he never lost the impression produced upon him by the Wednesday evening and Sunday services at the hospital. She would always let the railway men come in to see him at any time, however inconvenient to herself, except on Sunday. She never relaxed the strict rule, "No visitors on Sunday." Her reason for this was, that whenever it was at all possible she liked to go to church herself, and she could not trust the patients' friends not to bring in forbidden articles of food and drink during her absence. But former patients might come to see her on Sunday, and a special welcome, with an invitation to tea, was often given after they had joined in the hospital service. They sang hymns in the evening, and Chell declared he could sing "till he was hoarse" with Sister Dora. Like many other men, he used to bring all his troubles to her, and found a never-failing, sympathetic friend and helper.

No representations on her part as to infection could prevent Chell from going to see his friend, now that she was cut off from the rest of the world; and in this respect he was not alone. Two former patients, one of them porter at the Cottage Hospital, constantly visited her, and others would have gladly done the same had she not prevented it. After she had been a few days in her new abode, she writes the following letter to a very dear friend :—

"*The Epidemic Hospital, Walsall, March* 1, 1875.

"MY DEAR ——,

"I do not know what my darling will say to me when she hears where I am. I came and opened the small-pox hospital on Saturday. It was spreading in the town, and no one could be found to come; also, the people could not be persuaded to come until they heard I was here. So I came on Saturday, and had not been here half an hour before seven arrived; so I have my hands full, for I cannot get a decent woman to come and help, though we pay well. I have got two 'critters' from the workhouse; one is so helpless, I have to do the work for her, and the other sits up at nights; so can do no more. One man is so delirious I cannot keep my eye off him, or else he is out of bed. Then I have a baby a *year* old, and another younger, and they are so cross; they keep up their music night and day. They are all so pleased to have me here. I had such a nice Sunday. God's blessing seemed very much on the place. I spoke to them. . . . Oh that I had Mr. Twigg's power to help souls! I know you all will pray for me, that, living or dying, I may glorify Him. You must not fret for me. A kiss to all my beloved children. . . .

"Your faithful friend,

"SISTER DORA."

Again to the same friend she writes :—

"*The Epidemic Hospital, March* 4, 1875.

"MY DARLING ——,

"Your letter, which I received last night, made me cry; it was so long, so full of affection, and I had never seen any one all day beyond my patients to speak to. My darling, you must not come, if anything should happen. You are a very likely subject to take it, and this place smells of pox from the moment you open the door. You must not fret. I rejoice that He has permitted one so unworthy to work for Him; and oh, if He should think me fit to lay down my life for Him, rejoice, rejoice at so great a privilege. My heart is running over with thankfulness, and as I toil on I seem to hear the still small voice, 'Ye did it unto Me.' . . . Oh, don't talk about my life. If you knew it you would be down on your knees crying for mercy for me, a sinner. How God keeps silence so long is my wonder. Remember me at Holy Communion. Have you told Mr. Twigg? What did he say? If things were only going on well at the hospital I should not mind, but —— is so naughty again. . . . The text and verse for to-day are so beautiful: 'I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her.'

'Once more He speaks—no stern rebuke,
No anger, in the word—
"Is it so hard to turn from all,
And walk with Me, thy Lord?

Come; thou hast never heard My voice
As thou shalt hear it now;
I have no words for brighter days
Like those the dark ones know!"'

Now, is not that beautiful? One man is blind with the pox. Another, a woman, is very delirious; she tried to escape last night; it took myself and the porter to hold her down. That fellow is very good; he scrubbed the kitchen floor early this morning to save me. You would laugh to see me washing my babies. Poor things! they are smothered in pox. I am obliged to put them into a warm bath. . . . They are getting quite fond of me; but they do make washing. We have all that to do besides the night nursing, so you may fancy! I am writing this while waiting for my potatoes to boil. My bedroom and sitting-room is getting to look quite gay with flowers. I find time to read to my patients. They have scarcely ever heard of Jesus, and they are so ill they cannot attend to much. You must write again. I have no one to speak to, no time to read, and my letters are company at meal-times. I really wish you could take a peep at me. I am very bright and happy, and like this hospital better than the other. I have all so much under my eye. Of course there is not the change of work, and no time for breathing a mouthful of fresh air. Faithful Murray comes every evening, and does my messages, etc. I believe he would not mind taking the small-pox for

me to nurse him! Remember me most kindly to your husband. Kiss all my darling children.

"Believe me your affectionate

"SISTER DORA."

To another friend, a clergyman, she writes, on March the 10th:—"I did so wish to see you before I entered on my new duties, but I was so hurried, I had time for nothing. I wanted to receive the Holy Communion. I do miss my Sundays; here they seem so desolate. If it were not for the thought 'where two or three are gathered together, *there* am *I* in the midst,' I do not know what I should do. . . . I think I may almost say it is a closer walk with God. With the pestilence all around, you cannot help living each day as if it were your last. There has come that peace which the world cannot give. If I had a wish, it would be that He would count me worthy to lay down my life for Him. We have nine patients, one come in since I began this letter. You know what kind of nursing it is—what objects they are. . . . All those who are here have either been as out-patients, or had some one belonging to them at the hospital, so we are like old friends. I have got a servant, the plague of my life. It *is* good to have some cross, so I take her as such. You will remember me in your prayers.

"I remain your faithful

"SISTER DORA.

"I omitted one thing—the bill which came yesterday. Did I not give you the money for it the last time you called at the hospital? If so, will you see to it directly? If *not*, will you let me know? for I wish to set my house in order, lest the decree should go forth, 'Thou shalt die, and not live.'—S. D."

This letter was the first intimation received by the friend to whom it was written that Sister Dora had gone to the Epidemic Hospital. He went to see her at once, and thus describes his visit:—"She was very cheerful indeed, and I remember she admitted that she did hope, if she got the small-pox, it would not make her hideous!—supposing she survived. I remember she talked about Pompey's soldiers, and their care for their handsome faces. . . . The patients were nearly all of the lowest and most ignorant class, but they seemed to place implicit reliance on Sister Dora. Every one gave the hospital a very wide berth." . . .

She wrote to some friends, begging them to send her all the old railway novels they could find; for she said she was so weary at night that nothing but a *real sensation novel* would keep her awake while she was not actually employed with her patients, and she was afraid of sleeping heavily. Some months afterwards, when she offered to return the books—which, however, she

was requested to commit to the flames—she said, "Oh, I did enjoy those stories!" In another letter, dated March 27th, she says: "I have been eagerly waiting to hear if I might come to St. James's, Wednesbury. The doctor says that, after such a drive, there is no danger. But of course I could not come without Mr. Twigg's consent. It is a month to-day since I came here. I have never had my bonnet on, nor even been to the gate. The cases are getting much fewer; if no more come in we shall be able to close the week after next. I hear it is very bad in Birmingham."

Little did Sister Dora think how many times that month was to be multiplied before her labours would be over, or even her heart might have sunk within her at the prospect which lay before her. She continues:—

"Don't tell any one, for things get so exaggerated; but I have been *very* poorly. I have had a very happy time, but a most unsatisfactory set of patients. I have not had a creature in to do a hand's turn since last Thursday week. I wish you could see how clean the place is. I am getting quite proud of my cooking. The porter here is an old soldier, and he is so helpful; always lights the kitchen fire and does the range, and is on the look-out to help me in every way. . . . Good wishes for Easter to your good husband and yourself,

"Your affectionate

"Sister Dora."

On Easter Day she wrote to one of her lady-pupils at the Cottage Hospital :—

"I did not answer your letter, for I was too busy. Saturday being cleaning day, I was scrubbing up all my places. My place is gay with flowers, and so sweet with violets. . . . Now, pluck up courage about this operation; it is something to see it in your lifetime. As regards the cooking, will you tell your cousin (the lady at the head of the South Kensington Cookery School) that, as soon as I leave here, I will pay the fee and wait my time. I only wish I had known something of it before I came here. I like it, but I do not feel master of my business. This is not an Easter letter; I have simply confined myself to business. Yours,

"S. D."

The versatility of a mind which, in the midst of the horrors of small-pox, could calmly look forward and make arrangements for a future time to be spent in learning to cook, is remarkable. Again she writes to a lady-pupil :—

"My Irishwoman (the servant) walked off this afternoon, and went drinking, actually in the middle of washing. Some people came to tell me she was drunk. She and I must part company to-morrow; we cannot be so disgraced. It is now past seven, and she left me at two, and a boy raving! I am sure he will die, poor fellow, for he

is the *only* son. . . . I do feel so ill. The porter is just as bad. I suppose it is breathing the poison so much."

Excellent as the porter was in some respects, the form his human imperfection took was somewhat serious under the circumstances. After receiving his wages on Saturday night he would go off "on the drink," and not reappear till Sunday evening, when he was always much ashamed of himself, and received Sister Dora's reproaches with becoming meekness. One Saturday night she was left absolutely alone with her patients. One of them, a Roman Catholic, was dying, and he entreated that he might see the priest. She had no one to send, so she went herself to the priest's house in the dead of night, running all the way, in terror at leaving the hospital unguarded. The priest was astonished beyond measure to see her, and asked why she had not sent a servant. "I have none," was her reply; "since my Irishwoman left, not a soul can be got to come near us for love or money." The priest's indignation induced him to go the next morning and represent to the Town Council, with an earnest remonstrance, that they were killing the Sister, and that efficient help ought to be procured for her at all costs. "No one will go," was the answer; although, if a sufficient bribe had been offered, it can hardly be doubted that helpers might have been found. Sister Dora,

however, maintained that, except for leaving the hospital, she did not mind going out at night, since, come what might, she must sit up.

Another Saturday night, when the porter was as usual, as she said, "at his tricks;" she was quietly reading her yellow-backed novel, when a delirious patient, a tall, heavy man, in the worst stage of confluent small-pox, threw himself out of bed, with a loud yell, and rushed to the door before she could stop him. She had no time for hesitation, but at once grappled with him, all covered as he was with the loathsome disease. Her combined strength and determination prevailed, and she got him back into bed, and held him there by main force until the doctor arrived in the morning. His amazement when she told him of her hand-to-hand struggle, knew no bounds. His description of her at this time is as follows:—"Sister Dora could sit up at night, and work all day, with little or no rest, and as far as I am able to judge, she was neither physically nor mentally the worse for it. Her strength was superhuman. I never saw such a woman." She seemed, indeed, utterly incapable of feeling fatigued; the more dreadful and disgusting her work, the more her spirits rose to the occasion.

It sounds almost incredible, but it is nevertheless a fact that she was in the habit of bringing back to life patients who had sunk into the first stage of the fatal collapse which often precedes death

from small-pox, by actually putting her mouth to theirs, and breathing into them, until vitality was restored.

The little small-pox ambulance, in the shape of an omnibus, was well known in the streets of Walsall. One or more patients could be placed on the floor of the carriage in their beds, while by their side sat Sister Dora, says an eye-witness, "with her jolly face, smiling out at the window all the way." When people refused to send their patients to the hospital, she would go in the ambulance, and announce that she had "come to fetch So-and-so;" and if further difficulty was made, she would take up the man or woman in her arms, as easily as if the burden had been a baby, and lift it into her omnibus. The friends rarely interfered to prevent her from carrying off her cargo.

From the midst of this isolated world of suffering and disease she writes to a friend, who, it seems, found difficulty in forgiving an injury: "I hope your happy, loving nature is coming back to you. 'The winter is over and gone.' Darling, you cannot forgive by nature, but grace could enable you to do it. Remember, in proportion as you forgive, so you plead with God to forgive you. Every time you show your face in prayer, you would not like God to think only of your sins? No, He says tenderly, 'Thy sins and iniquities are remembered no more.'

Oh, who is he that is without sin amongst you? Let him cast the first stone. Always think of that when you are picking up even a pebble." On the last day of April she wrote again: "I am still a prisoner, surrounded by my lepers. I do feel so thankful that I came; no one hesitates to come here, now they know I will nurse them. . . . I have had time and opportunity to spread the 'glad tidings' to many an ignorant soul who has been brought in here. I was quite touched the other night when one little boy said, 'Please tell me some more of Jesus;' and his face lighted up as he caught the idea of the wonderful redemption, and said, 'Did He really die for *me?*' . . . I thank God daily for my life here. I feel He sent me, and He has blessed it to my own soul, and I hope from henceforth that I shall indeed serve Him better, and be more zealous and earnest in winning souls for Christ. Oh, how sorry we shall be (if there be sorrow in heaven), if we should enter in at the gate, and enjoy ourselves to all eternity, to think how little we did to help others on the narrow way! When I think of it I feel as if I could be all day long on my knees, praying for poor sinners; and I am overwhelmed with regret when I think of the hours I have wasted—the souls that have come and gone out of the hospital, and I have not led them to Christ. I thank Him for sparing my life a little longer, that I may do better."

To a friend who had offered to come and nurse her if she should be ill, she writes: "I cannot tell you how very sweet and comforting your letters are to me. But you must not think of coming if I am ill; you could do me no good, and you must think of all your darling children. I think any one coming in fresh into this place would be sure to catch it. And, strangely enough, it is nearly three weeks after you have begun before the pox comes out, or you know what is the matter. A case in to-day; the boy has been ailing, sick and shivering, for three weeks, and broke out this morning. A man we have who is awfully ill; they thought he had rheumatic fever until he broke out. The doctor wanted me to drive to St. James's this evening, but I did not dare until I had asked Mr. Twigg's leave. . . . I could come away directly afterwards and mix with no one. He says there can be no danger after such a drive, and I would change my clothes. Would you mind to ask him, dear? and I would come on Wednesday evening if he consents. . . . But it is so desolate! I think it would freshen soul and body. . . . All my patients are doing well, thank God. We have ten. I know you pray for us. I have been thinking of Mr. Twigg's teaching to-day. Let me have another of your nice letters."

Towards the middle of May she seemed to have a longing for some human companionship besides

that of doctor and patients. She writes: "Our last patient has gone out, and should no more come *before* Sunday, I should so like to come and spend the day at Wednesbury and enjoy the services. Now, would you have the least fear if I did? I would change everything, and put on a fresh dress. Let me know about Holy Communion. I could come early in the morning, and spend the day. But of course, if the Master comes and calls for me, and sends us in more cases, I cannot come."

"The Master" did call for His servant, not on that Sunday only, but throughout the long summer days which followed. Many times she thought her work was over, and once she had actually cleaned the hospital thoroughly, and put it in order before it should be finally shut up, when behold, another case of small-pox appeared, and her labours began again. She did not lose patience, but she was terribly worried by the unsatisfactory state of affairs at the Cottage Hospital; and as the number of her small-pox patients diminished, she regularly went back to her old post twice or thrice a week, merely changing her clothes first, and taking a bath. Although she could only spend a few hours at a time in the Cottage Hospital, she was enabled by this arrangement to keep things tolerably straight, and matters which had formed subjects of disagreement among her substitutes were now referred to her for settlement. The surgeon in-

variably refused to perform any serious operation without her assistance, and she led a life of divided interests, of mental worry and physical fatigue, such as would have worn out most women in a month. Not until the middle of August, 1875, did the last small-pox patient disappear from her horizon, and she joyfully "cleared up," leaving the Epidemic Hospital in the hands of the white-washers, and returned, after exactly six months' absence, to her beloved surgical work, as quietly as she had left it.

In spite of the joy of her friends when she showed her face among them once more, and the pleasure she took in healing and mending wounds and fractures, a kind of disappointment clung to her, that she had not been thought worthy to lay down her life for others, and she always spoke lovingly and even longingly of that "*dear* Epidemic Hospital," as if it had been a time of shelter and rest, rather than of trial to her. But her labours were yet far from their end; indeed, the severest of them were still to come.

CHAPTER VII.

LIFE AT WALSALL HOSPITAL AND SECOND MISSION: 1875–1876.

"She all those human figures breathing there
Beheld as living spirits,—to her eyes
The naked beauty of the soul lay bare,
And often, through a rude and worn disguise
She saw the inner form most bright and fair—
And then,—she had a charm of strange device,
Which, murmured on mute lips with tender tone,
Could make that spirit mingle with her own."

On Friday afternoon, October the 15th of that same year 1875, eleven men were seated underneath the furnace of the ironworks at Burchills, near Walsall, and another man on the top was feeding the fires, when an explosion took place. Those below were covered with molten metal, which poured forth in a cataract, and streamed all over them. In their terror and agony they jumped into the neighbouring canal, from which they were with difficulty rescued, placed in cabs, and driven to the hospital. One man alone desired to be taken home, and as soon as it was possible for her

to leave the others, Sister Dora went and dressed his wounds. So wholesale an accident by burning had scarcely ever been known at Walsall, and it was not easy to make room for the poor charred bodies which were carried in and laid on the floor. All but very serious cases then under treatment were turned out into the passages, and some were sent home, till one ward was entirely cleared and ready for the sufferers. They were so burnt all over and disfigured that they were more like charred logs of wood than human beings. Some were in terrible agony, crying out, "Water! water!" A few were dying painlessly, but most of them were entreating, "Sister, come and dress me!" "*Do* dress me!" "Oh, you don't know how bad I am!" She answered, "Oh, my poor men! I'll dress you all, if you'll give me time." She gave them each a glass of brandy, and then tried to undress them, but the flesh was so burnt away, the water into which they had jumped having terribly aggravated their injuries, that it was almost impossible to cut off their clothes.

Both sight and smell were terrible, and even the medical men of the town, who promptly came to help, were incessantly sick, and could hardly stay in the ward. Ladies in Birmingham and in the neighbourhood, who heard of the accident, offered their assistance, and a few actually came, but scarcely one of them could get beyond the door

of the ward. One poor man named Phillips—let due honour be done to his memory—seeing how Sister Dora was distracted by the cries for help by which she was surrounded, said, "Sister Dora, I want to be dressed *very* bad, but if there's any wants you worse, go and do them first." He was in intense agony, and able to lie only on his face, and he died during the night. Another died on Sunday, but the rest lingered, some for ten days, some for longer; and all this time Sister Dora not only never went to bed, but she scarcely ever left the foul atmosphere of the ward. Her devoted friend the Secretary came and helped her, and one lady always stayed with her at night.

The surgeon testifies that this was the sole occasion on which he ever knew Sister Dora to fortify herself for her work with brandy. Without it she could scarcely have endured those ten fearful days. Many people came desiring to relieve her, and thinking that they could endure the scene if they tried, but in two or three minutes they were sitting, sick and faint with horror, on the stairs, and Sister Dora was laughing over them, and advising them to go home as fast as they could. Two men ultimately recovered. A man called Cassity was one of the two survivors, and from his graphic account most of the details here given are taken. He was the man at the top of the furnace when the explosion took place, and seeing in a moment what

was coming, had just time to cover his face with his hands, thus saving his eyes from the fire which flared up towards them, but sacrificing his hands and arms, which were terribly burnt, and one hand almost entirely gone. The rest of his body was much injured, but his burns were not like those made by the molten iron, and after six months in the hospital he recovered his health. He describes Sister Dora going from bed to bed, talking, laughing, and even joking with the poor men; sitting by their bedsides, telling stories, which she hoped might divert them for a moment from their misery; feeding them with the tenderest care; helping them to bear their pain, and pointing out the way to heaven to those who were appointed to die. "She was with us almost night and day," Cassity said; and after the poor creatures had all died, except Cassity and a man named Ward, she would still come down two or three times in the night to see that the survivors were doing well. Cassity described her, in her cap and slippers, silently going round at two a.m. from bed to bed, smiling as she went. "It did you good only to look at her." Cassity was an Irishman, and as he sat telling his story, he showed his burnt and shrivelled hands and arms, truly wonderful witnesses to the healing powers of his nurse. Every time he said "Sister Dora," he stood up and reverently pulled his forelock, as if he had

pronounced the name of a saint or an angel, which he was scarcely worthy to utter. "What we felt for her I couldn't tell you; my tongue won't say it."

Cassity went by the name of "Burnty." He never expected to walk again, his feet were so much injured. Sister Dora, however, affirmed that he would be able to walk, and accordingly, before he left the hospital, she sent him to be measured for a pair of boots, which she intended as her parting gift. The woman at the boot-shop said, "Well, I wouldn't be such a softy as to think you'll ever be able to wear a pair of boots with those feet;" and, much disheartened, poor Cassity returned to "tell Sister." She burst into a merry laugh, saying, "You'll wear out many pair of boots, my burnty." "And so I have," said Cassity; "she was right enough. But it was all along of *her*, who never left my burns a day all those months, without looking to them with her own hands." It was twelve months before Cassity did any work, and he came up constantly to be "dressed" after he left the hospital.

Soon after this accident, Sister Dora was travelling, and entered into conversation with a fellow-passenger, who desired to hear an account of the Burchills explosion. She gave him her own description (and those who have heard her relate such scenes will know how graphic it must have been), when he suddenly exclaimed, "Surely you are not Sister Dora?" She smilingly assured him

that she was. "I am glad to have seen Sister Dora," replied the stranger. He then produced a five-pound note, which he asked her to accept for the hospital, in remembrance of their conversation.

The "tales," as the patients called the stories which Sister Dora was in the habit of telling by their bedside, were sometimes details about her own early life, and sometimes amusing experiences among the out-patients. She had a remarkable power of extracting amusement from trifling matters, and she seldom went out for an hour without bringing back something which would interest or amuse her people. All her pleasures, great or small, she was eager to share with others. One day, while the work was going on in the out-patients' ward, she went to fetch her lady-pupil, her eyes dancing with merriment, and saying, "I have often heard the old saying, 'a hair of the dog that bit you,' but I never saw the remedy applied before. It was too good to keep to myself!" She showed a dog-bite, upon which a mass of *hairs* had been plastered, whether of the animal who had made the wound, or of some other dog, did not appear. Another day, a woman came up to the hospital with a severe cut on her head, the result of rough treatment from her husband. As Sister Dora dressed the head, she listened, with the compassionate look which had such consoling power in it, to the poor woman's story, who declared she was

determined to go before the magistrates, and make a charge against her husband, the very next morning. "Are you quite sure, now, to go?" asked the Sister. "Yes," replied the woman; "I can bear such treatment no longer." Upon this Sister Dora began to bandage the head much more elaborately than the hurt required, and on seeing her lady-pupil's inquiring look, said aside, with a merry twinkle, "I think the husband will get an extra week for my beautiful *second* bandage!" It is provoking to relate that the much-enduring wife determined, with the morning's light, to give her husband another trial, so that Sister Dora's ingenious little scheme was wasted.

These, and many more such-like histories, she stored up for the benefit of her fellow-workers and of the patients. Her retentive memory must have been an inestimable possession to her. She not only had the "royal gift" of remembering a face, but she recollected in one moment all the circumstances under which she had seen it before. The most trifling incidents were unconsciously impressed upon her memory, and very often turned to account, to enable her to gain influence over her patients. An eye-witness, who was a staunch friend of Sister Dora, and for whose self-denying labours and earnest goodness she had real admiration, sends the following record of his impressions of her work and influence in the hospital:—

"From Nov. 1871 to Nov. 1874, I generally held two services every week at the hospital. When the service was over I used to stay and talk with the patients, and thus had many opportunities of seeing Sister Dora at her work. I just roughly note down a few leading traits of her character, as it showed itself to me.

"She never came into the wards except with a face of sunshine. She was naturally cheerful, so this was generally easy to her; but she has told me, that if she felt depressed, she waited until she got the mastery over it, and took care never to enter amongst her charges until she could do so with a cheerful countenance.

"She had a bright, ready wit, and a playful irony that never wounded, but often had the effect of stirring up some poor, feeble-spirited patient, bracing him like a tonic. I wish I could remember some of her little sayings, but they most of them have passed away, though the effect remains; and you know how hard it is to reproduce on paper those half-humorous sayings, whose chief charm lies in the way they are said.

"There was a man whom she induced to become quite a leader of the responses at prayers, by saying that his very name (Clarke) ought to make him help the parson. Poor fellow! Clarke had to lie many weary weeks with a shattered leg, and often he grew desponding. Fragments of bone used to

work through the skin to the surface, and Clarke used to keep these splinters in a box. She used to rally him about *his bones,* and many a time made all in the ward laugh by asking Clarke 'to show his bones' to some visitor. She always tried to make Sunday a day of extra brightness, and the same at Christmas and Easter. (On these days there used to be full choral services held in the hospital.) On the evening of New-Year's Day she used to give an entertainment to the inmates and as many old patients as she could accommodate. These festivals were most enjoyable. There was first a kind of 'People's evening,' or 'Penny Readings entertainment,' and the patients seemed to forget their pains, and good humour and bright faces filled the great ward where it was held. Before it ended some one generally gave an address to the patients. Then came supper, to which all who could move off their beds sat down, and those who could not were well cared for. Many a poor fellow now at work in coal-pit and workshop will long remember those evenings of bright and innocent mirth.

"Never did Sister Dora attempt that impossible feat of 'cramming religion down people's throats.' She would bide her time most patiently, but never did she seem to forget that men's souls are worth infinitely more than their bodies. I have told you, I think, about poor Powell. He woke one night

and found Sister Dora kneeling by his bedside, praying quietly, but in spoken words. He made no sign, but lay and listened, and heard her pray most fervently for his soul's salvation. It impressed him deeply. He had never thought his soul of much value before, I imagine, and besides, no doubt he was touched by such an evidence of her deep interest in him.

"She sometimes had patients who were utter sceptics. She soon found them out, and was always very careful, and used much tact in dealing with them. She knew that they were scanning her conduct, and would judge of Christianity more or less by the way she presented it to them in her daily actions. Many who came in scoffers went out convinced that Jesus was the Christ. I knew none who were not convinced that she, at least, was true and good. One hard sarcastic Scotchman spoke to me about her just before he left the hospital. He was one of those working men who are not uncommon in towns—men who have imbibed Tom Paine and Voltaire through secondary sources, and are bitterly prejudiced against Christianity and its professors, especially parsons. He told me he had watched her carefully while he lay there, and gave as his emphatic verdict, 'She's a noble woman; but she'd have been that without her Christianity.'

"It was a grief to Sister Dora when she had

such an obstinate sceptic in the ward. She felt that there was an evil influence always at work. These men listen respectfully while a clergyman speaks, and when he is gone, if he has made any unguarded statements, or talked twaddle, he is unmercifully ridiculed to all the surrounding patients. Sister Dora did for many of them what no eloquence, or logic, or reasoning, could have done. She made them respect, at least, the religion of which she was to them a symbol.

"I was present in the wards one morning when a poor Irish youth was brought in fearfully crushed and mangled. He had been working on the railway, and run over by a train. In a few minutes he expired, and scarcely had he ceased to breathe when in rushed his mother, who had been summoned to see her boy. She came with impetuous haste to the bedside, and gazed for a moment ere she could realize the truth that he was dead. Then followed one of the most agonizing scenes. Never was grief more dramatically and strikingly expressed than by her cries and fervent appeals to the dead to speak to her once more. It was too much for many of the men in the ward, themselves softened and weakened by recent dangers, and some not yet out of peril, and I own to a 'lump in the throat' myself. Sister Dora gently but firmly drew the mother away, and in a few moments, by some strange magic, silenced

her wild outcries. Before I left I spoke to Sister Dora of the woman and her grief. She smiled gently, and said, 'Poor thing! she'll soon get over it.' 'What makes you say that, Sister?' I said, somewhat remonstratingly. 'Well,' she answered, 'she made just as pathetic a show of grief over her boy when he came here some months ago with a slight cut in his finger.' Sister Dora was right; I saw the woman two days after, and spoke to her for some time, and heard her pathetically (?) bemoaning the loss her boy's wages would be to her and the children, and scarce a word of regret for the boy himself!"

Yet another story must be given illustrative of Sister Dora's tenderness towards the forms of religious expression adopted by others. An Irish sailor, a Roman Catholic, was brought to her with his ribs broken. As she undressed him and examined into the extent of his injuries, the surgeon, who stood on the other side of the bed, pointed with his finger to marks of tattooing on the man's side, saying, "What on earth is that for?" The sailor explained that the marks were the monograms of our Saviour and the Virgin Mary, and were intended to secure Christian burial for him in case he should be drowned, and his unknown body be washed up on shore and fall into the hands of Christians. The doctor felt at once that this explanation would delight Sister Dora, and that

the man's superstition would appeal to that love of the sensational which has already been mentioned as one of her characteristics. Nor was he mistaken. She exclaimed sentimentally, "Well, now, only think of that!" The doctor was so much amused that he laughed out loud. In a moment he perceived by her flashing eyes and heightened colour that he was in serious disgrace with her, and that he had better make his escape as soon as possible, trusting that by the morning her wrath would have evaporated.

No such thing. On his arrival the next day he found her walking up and down her sitting-room, just as angry as he had seen her once before. "She asked me," said the surgeon, "what I meant by disturbing the poor man's simple faith. Had I anything better to give him in exchange? or was my religion, which taught me to scoff at another's, better and more childlike than my own, likely to be of any service to the man?" All this was hurled at the doctor, while she continued to pace the room in great anger. He retreated as best he might, leaving her to her own reflections, which, in the space of two hours, resulted in a penitent letter, in which she asked his forgiveness for having completely lost her temper.

At the end of the year 1875, serious difficulties arose with regard to the Cottage Hospital. The ward into which the victims of the Burchills explosion had been received, became hopelessly in-

fected. Case after case of erysipelas declared itself, wounds refused to heal, and finally the whole hospital seemed to be impregnated by the poison. Meetings were held by the committee to consider what should be done; and at last, by the advice of competent counsellors, it was determined that the old hospital should be pulled to the ground, and that a new building should be raised on a larger scale, suited in every way to the needs of the increasing population. The next question was, what was to be done meanwhile?

With much difficulty, a small house in Bridgeman Street, the only one to be found, was fitted up as a temporary hospital. It was, however, unsuitable in almost every respect for its purpose, being three stories high, and standing so close to the railroad that every train as it passed seemed to shake the building to its foundations. It only held ten beds, or twelve at the outside, nor was there any separate room for out-patients, who consequently stood in crowds in the narrow little passage, and on the stairs, or when these were filled, overflowed into the street. The nurses' living-rooms were so small and inconvenient that Sister Dora was obliged to give up taking lady-pupils, and be content with the help of night-nurses and servants. This, indeed, was no privation to her; on the contrary, it relieved her of anxiety. She revelled in having the patients all "under her own eye," as she ex-

pressed it. Those cases for which no room could be found in the house she visited at their own homes, setting their fractures and dressing their wounds, sometimes returning at night to the hospital, but sometimes spending it by the bedside of a sick person who wanted a nurse more than those who were already well cared for within the walls of her "Maison-Dieu."

The unearthly shrieks of the engines on the line, and the shrill railway whistles, were at first a source of constant annoyance to those patients who were seriously ill. Sister Dora remonstrated with her friends on the line, begging them to remember their suffering neighbours, and not to let off steam *just* by the little hospital, so as to awaken a poor feverish patient out of his first healthy sleep, or to startle a burnt baby into screams for the rest of the night. So effectual were her representations, sometimes enforced, no doubt, by the engine-drivers' recollections of their own sufferings, and her tender care of them in their hour of need, that after a few months had been passed in the temporary hospital, she said, "You wouldn't believe how quiet they (the railway men) are." It was soon found necessary to leave the out-patients' ward attached to the old hospital undisturbed, and to use it as before. This arrangement added a full ten minutes' walk every afternoon up the hill, in heat, or cold, or wet, to the Sister's labours.

In November, 1876, when patients and nurse were fairly established in their temporary home, a mission was held in the parish to which the little house in Bridgeman Street belonged. Sister Dora prepared to throw herself into it heart and soul. Her former experience in the same line, slight as it was, had been enough to show her, and those under whom she was to work, that she possessed rare capabilities for it. The opportunities which her life had afforded her of studying human nature had not been lost upon her, and now she found a use for the experience which she had gained. She wrote on the first day of the mission, which was to last a week, to the Vicar of her parish, as follows:—

"*The Hospital, Nov.* 18*th*, 1876.

"DEAR MR. FITZGERALD,

"Would you send me some more papers as regards the list of services? I have found some who want them, and I have not one myself. Also, without much inconvenience, could you place your hand on the little book for lay-workers? I want to read it over again. When I awoke this morning I thought 'what was going to happen to-day?' and I remembered the mission. . . . I shall send up my poor prayers for you during the mission." . . .

She did not only pray, she laboured unceasingly

night and day; the whole of that week and for many weeks afterwards she followed up that one week's work. It can be readily conceived, that, by this time, there was scarcely any one belonging to the lower classes in Walsall whom she did not know personally. But there was one class of people towards whom, above all others, she had long felt the deepest pity, and among whom she had already made many secret efforts to win her way. Now at last she saw her opportunity. She suggested to the clergy engaged in the mission that a special attempt should be made, to rescue some of the miserable women with whom the streets of the town swarmed at nights, and who seemed, as a general rule, beyond the reach of any human power to reclaim. They readily agreed to her proposal, on condition that she herself should conduct this part of the mission, and enable them to profit by her experience and knowledge of the class with which they were going to deal. Accordingly, on the first night of the mission, after all the services were over, and the town was asleep, two of the missioners were guided by Sister Dora into one of the worst "slums" of Walsall, where the inhabitants turn night into day, "loving darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil."

In the midst of these courts stands a small building, which has been applied to a variety of

purposes. It was once used as an epidemic hospital at the time of a severe visitation of cholera, some forty years ago. It has been used also for a school-room and mission-room. Soon it will disappear altogether, for the whole of the area on which it stands is to be cleared; and the crowded "rookeries" around it are condemned under the Artisans' Dwellings Improvement Act, and will be replaced by decent houses. On the present occasion it was turned into a mission-room, lights were burning in it, and the door stood open.

As Sister Dora passed this place with her two companions, a policeman stopped her, saying, "Hadn't we better be near, Sister; it's an ugly place?" "Oh," she said earnestly, "on *no* account; it would spoil all; they must not think we are afraid." As the three missioners turned down a narrow court, the most disreputable of all the neighbourhood, the Sister spoke to the clergy, "Now keep close behind me. I am safe enough, but *your* lives are not worth a moment's purchase if you are seen down here without me to protect you." They followed her, and she paused at the door of a small house brightly lighted, through the window of which she bade them look, taking care at the same time not to be discovered.

They saw a circle of women sitting round a table, evidently receiving orders from an ill-looking man, who appeared to be master. Sister Dora knocked

at the door, and received at first no answer. She knocked again, and a man's voice growled, "Who's there?" "Sister Dora," was the answer. A volley of oaths was the next sound, coupled with the question, "What do you mean by coming here at this time of night?" She merely answered, "Open the door—it's Sister; I want to speak to you." The man got up swearing, and did as she told him. She stood in the doorway, looking with infinite compassion upon the scene before her, and exhorting the man as follows: "Why, Bill, what possesses you to treat me like this? Don't you remember what you told me the last time you came up to have that head seen to?" Growls from the man, and muttered oaths, was the rejoinder; with orders to "be quick, and say what she wanted." "I'll tell you what I want," answered Sister Dora, advancing into the room, and holding out her hand, first to one woman and then another: and as they crowded round her, she addressed them severally. "Well, Lizzie," or "Mary, how are you?" and "I've seen you before—did up your arm last winter twelvemonth—but I can't put a name to you;" or, "You came up to see me two months ago." Then, speaking to them all, "I want you all to go down on your knees with me now, this moment, and say a prayer to God." To the utter amazement of the two clergymen, the whole party, the man as well as all the women, knelt with Sister Dora, while

she offered up aloud a prayer from the depths of her heart, for her "brothers and sisters" who were gathered there with her. As the man rose from his knees, he turned to her in a shamefaced manner and said, "I'm very sorry, Sister, I was so rude to you. I didn't mean it; you've been good to me." "Then," answered she, quickly, "if you're sorry, will you do what I ask you?" "That I will," replied he. "I want you, and all these women here, to come with me into a room we have got hard by, and to listen to something some friends of mine have to say to you there." Bill at once prepared to obey her like a little child, and most of the women followed his example.

The two clergymen had vanished into the little mission-room, which was soon filled. But they had scarcely begun their service when a rough fellow pushed his way in, accompanied by some women, and set to work shoving and nudging those who were already there, and jeering at them with coarse bitterness. "Bill" turned to Sister Dora, by whose side he sat, and said imploringly, "Make him be quiet, Sister; now do." She rose, saying authoritatively, "Now then, Jack, none of that. Come and sit you down here by me, and behave yourself." The dignity of her appearance and manner entirely quelled his savage nature, and as meekly as a lamb Jack came to her side, and the service proceeded, she seated between the two ruffians, who, under

ordinary circumstances, would have thought little of murdering anybody who had thus dared to interfere with them.

Words are weak to describe such a scene, and those who witnessed it declare that no description of it is possible; that they can hardly believe it ever really took place; and that it seems to them now, to look back upon, like a dream, or a vision of the night, which they expected to vanish as they awoke. The surgeon of the hospital, who was inclined to be sceptical about the genuineness of impressions produced in such a manner, came one night, watched Sister Dora's proceedings, and pronounced that this was "the real thing, and no humbug." It was, however, only the beginning of her mission in this direction, and the rest of it may be best told in the words of one of the clergy who worked with her. More and more women, brought by her mighty personal influence, came to the meetings every night.

"In a little room, at midnight, was assembled as strange a company as ever it contained—about thirty-five women of the class that are spoken of as 'fallen.' Sister Dora had gathered them by her own unassisted efforts, and I am sure that no one in the town but herself could have drawn them in. They came in by twos and threes, very quietly, for the most part, Sister Dora meeting them at the door with a kindly word of encouragement. There

was something very touching in her treatment and attitude towards them. No condescension, no 'stand apart, for I am holier than thou;' but yet, though she was so gracious and sisterly, they seemed to feel that she was rather a pitying angel than one of their own sex. It seemed to me that she knew them nearly all *by name;* and she told me that she had doctored nearly all of them at different times. Many of them used to seek her only after nightfall, but she was ever ready to help, and never scorned them. I know not whether I need dwell on the service. There were three clergymen present. The service began with a hymn, which many of them joined in. Prayer followed. Then two short addresses were given, and were listened to intently, and not without evident emotion on the part of some. Earnest appeals were made to them to forsake their present courses, and offers of guidance and assistance to such as should resolve to do so. When the service was over Sister Dora spoke to each of them as they left, and obtained promises that they would come again. A second service was held, and seemed even more successful than the first. Several stayed behind at its close to speak with the clergy and Sister Dora. Three, I believe, were eventually rescued (I can only speak of *one* myself). Many of them seemed to feel themselves 'tied and bound with the chain of their sins,' but yet they had no

strength to get free. Some of them were little better than slaves to some tyrant—some 'Bill Sikes' who treated them like a dog, and whom yet they clung to with dog-like fidelity.

"For some weeks after the mission Sister Dora still continued her labours amongst these poor sinners. Every Sunday night there was a late service held, and, braving no small risks amidst the drunken and dissolute, Sister Dora indefatigably visited their homes and *compelled* them to come in. Sister Dora always paid these visits alone. One visit she described to me. It was a much better house than any she had been in before —most of them being mere cottages—and the occupant was evidently superior to most of her neighbours in education. She was well dressed, and when she asked in a stately manner, 'To what am I indebted for the pleasure of your visit?' Sister Dora owned that she felt almost inclined to leave without delivering her soul. She began her difficult task, and was met at first with quiet, civil-spoken contempt; but her heart warmed as she reasoned and pleaded, and her words became inspired, and before she left the woman broke out into sobs, and they knelt together in prayer.

"It was work at times not unaccompanied by personal risk, but I have met few persons more utterly fearless. She came back to where I was waiting for her after diving into one of the

rookeries, and told me she had had a narrow escape. She had encountered a ruffian inflamed with drink, who burst out into a torrent of wild blasphemy, and threatened to have her life. He was quieted at once by his partner in sin, who said, 'Shut up, you fool—it's Sister Dora.' He even muttered some apology. Two of the women who had attended some of the services at the room were seized soon after by the police on a charge of robbery, and locked up. Sister Dora visited them frequently in the cells. Like her Master, she seemed never to despair of a human soul. The 'lost' were those whom she knew that He came to seek and save."

The visible effect of all this labour was infinitesimally small, and if the value of such deeds is to be measured by tangible results, it may perhaps be said these were not worth the trouble and anxiety bestowed on them. One couple, however, were married, and two girls sought to earn their livelihood by going to service, and kept their resolution steadily. But Sister Dora's strong faith led her to believe that the seed which had been sown during the mission week, although most of it might be cast on hard and uncultivated ground, would some day spring up and bear fruit. For some time after the mission she continued to hold midnight classes for these poor women, and thus to keep up her acquaintance with them, in order that no

opportunity of rescuing even a single soul from a life of misery and despair might be lost.

Next to the women, it was her strong desire to do something for the drivers of public cabs in Walsall. She felt much sympathy with them in their temptation to drink, to which the exposure to cold and wet is liable to lead. She asked and obtained leave, herself to hold a kind of meeting or class for them, between nine and ten in the evening during the mission. Many of them had been at the hospital, either as in or out patients; one or two had been there for many months; all knew Sister Dora well by sight and reputation. Every single cabman in Walsall came to her meetings except one, who was compelled always to be on duty to fetch passengers from a certain train, exactly at the hour of her class. This man went, almost crying, to tell "Sister" why he could not come. One of the cabmen, an old patient, told her that she was always to send for him when she wanted a drive, and he would drive her anywhere, at any time, for nothing, adding, "Stop, Sister; there's only one way as I won't drive you, and that's away from Walsall."

This week of the mission must have been spent by Sister Dora almost without rest. Her hospital labours were rather increased than diminished by the move into the temporary house, and as soon as she had "dressed her wounds," as she called it, and put all her patients to bed, she started forth

to her cabmen's gathering. When that was over she must have gone straight on to the midnight meeting; and when it is remembered that she never appeared in the wards of her hospital later than 6.30 a.m., it becomes evident that she burnt both ends of the candle at once, and that pretty fiercely, during the mission week. She further extended the field of her labours by walking about Walsall in order to fetch people to church, and she appeared at the evening service, whenever her regular duties would allow, with a goodly following, not only of old patients, but of waifs and strays. A friend who went with her on some of these expeditions, describes how little ragged, dirty boys playing in the streets, would run up as she walked along, pulling at her gown to attract her attention, and not satisfied till she had bent down from her majestic height to kiss their grimy faces, which they held up to her with entire confidence that they would get the notice which they craved. She was never too preoccupied to give them a merry word, or a playful rebuke, as she passed by, and the beaming expression which came over their faces as she spoke to them, was sufficient sign of the keen sympathy existing between herself and the child-nature which she loved and thoroughly understood.

The surgeon of the hospital tells a comic story of her way of dealing with children. He was standing

with her at the window of the little general sitting-room in the temporary hospital, looking out upon the railway line, which is there crossed by the road, and only divided from it by a row of iron railings and a gate. By these railings children congregate, to enjoy that never-failing source of excitement, the passing to and fro of trains. On that particular morning, as the Sister and surgeon stood deep in discussion over some specially interesting or anxious case, outside was a baby held in the arms of a nurse scarcely bigger than itself; both of them were craning their necks as far as possible, in order to see whether anything enlivening, in the shape of an express train, might possibly be at hand. The baby was squeezing an enormously large head tightly into the narrow opening between two railings, and the surgeon had just made the obvious professional remark to Sister Dora, "That child will speedily develop water on the brain, or I'm much mistaken,"—when, tripping down the steps of the bridge which crossed the line, came a smart young gentleman of about ten years old, evidently on his way to school, and keenly on the look-out for mischief to be performed by the road. As he passed the two absorbed figures at the bottom of the steps, his eyes brightened, and he gave a judicious push to the head of the unlucky baby, and thus sent it straight through the opening against which it had been pressed!

The doctor uttered a loud exclamation; but out rushed Sister Dora into the street like a flash of lightning, and seizing the young gentleman in the rear, inflicted a shower of sharp boxes first on one ear and then on the other. He looked up in astonishment, and seeing a tall, strong woman in white cap and apron, who seemed to have descended upon him, like retributive justice personified, and in whose powerful grasp he felt helpless, he set up loud yells of terror, in which he was joined by the nurse and baby. Sister Dora, when she considered that he had been sufficiently punished, turned her attention to the extrication of the big head from its iron vice—no easy task. The surgeon, who had witnessed the whole scene with much delight from the window, at length came to her assistance. The howls of the little boy were further increased by the doctor's coachman, who, having seen the affair from his position on the box of the carriage, now thought it was his turn to join in the fray, and made a successful cut with his whip at the knickerbockered legs of the young gentleman, who escaped from the scene of action as fast as they would carry him. The doctor was, not unnaturally, laughing too much to do anything himself, and Sister Dora, still boiling over with righteous indignation, was soothing the terrified baby. It was not until afterwards that she seemed to realize the utterly ludicrous nature of the whole business.

The surgeon, in relating the story, added, "I can tell you she laid on her blows pretty well; they must have been no joke at all. I don't ever remember to have seen anything better done; they were positively masterly boxes on the ear, just like everything else she did."

CHAPTER VIII.

LIFE IN THE TEMPORARY HOSPITAL. SISTER DORA LEAVES WALSALL: 1876–1878.

"The magic circle of her voice and eyes,
All savage natures did imparadise."

DURING the winter of 1876–77 Sister Dora, for the first time since the beginning of her hospital life, found a difficulty in lifting her patients. She could not understand from what cause this arose, and she paid little heed to it, working harder than before, carrying upstairs heavy mattresses and hods of coals. The narrowness and steepness of the staircase in the small house in Bridgeman Street added materially to her labour. It was difficult to convey a helpless person up to the wards, and taking the dead downstairs, which she did herself without assistance, was a problem which she solved by an invention of her own. She would pass a broad bandage round the corpse, and then, tying the ends of it together round her own neck, she would

take the dead body up in her strong arms, and carry it down to the mortuary. Many a time has her old night-nurse, Mrs. R——, said to her, "Sister, do let me carry that bedding, or those coals, for you;" and she has replied, "No, I am stronger than you are, and I want to save your strength," and picking up the load in the easy fashion which was the admiration of all who beheld it, she would stalk away with it. But she began to feel something which rendered the exercise of her physical strength, in which she had always delighted, a slight effort, and as the impediment increased, and was not the passing inconvenience she had hoped it might prove to be, she consulted a medical man with whom she was on terms of personal friendship. He examined her carefully, and discovered the existence of a disease, which, he told her, must ultimately be fatal to her life. At the same time he thought surgical aid might prolong her days; but she knew too much of the uncertain result of such measures to be ready at once to submit to the necessary treatment.

After a short struggle she made up her mind to allow the disease to take its natural course. She firmly resolved to let no one know her condition, and she made her medical friend pledge himself that he would not only never reveal the nature of her complaint, but that he would not divulge the fact that she had consulted him. The reason

she gave him was that she wished to continue her work as long as possible, and that if she were known to be ill or suffering, it would be made impossible for her to labour up to the last, as she desired. Her friend acquiesced in her wish, and she sought no second opinion. She was within easy reach of him at Walsall, and she determined to drive over and consult him whenever it might be necessary, but to have no regular medical attendance. She knew, alas! too well, by many a mournful experience, the slow stages of that disease, the course of which, when it has once taken its hold, no human skill can avail to arrest, scarcely even to delay.

She was suddenly brought, as it were, face to face with death; distant, perhaps, but inevitable: she, who was full of such exuberant life and spirits, that the very word death seemed a contradiction when applied to her. Even her doctor, as he looked at her blooming appearance, and measured with his eye her finely made form, was almost inclined to believe the evidence of his outward senses against his sober judgment, and to recall his well-founded opinion about the nature of her complaint. The suddenness of the blow, and the necessity of making up her mind at once as to how she should employ the remainder of her days, as well as the strength and spirit which she still felt within her, no doubt all contributed largely to the decision

that she would reveal her true condition to no human being.

But there was yet another motive, hidden, perhaps, even from herself. She could not endure pity. She, to whom everybody had learnt instinctively to turn for help and consolation, on whom others leant for support, must she now come down to ask of them sympathy and comfort? The pride of life was still surging up within her, that pride which had made her glory in her physical strength for its own sake, as well as for its manifold uses in the service of her Master. True, she had long been living two lives inseparably blended. The outward life, one of hard, unceasing, often uncongenial toil; the inner, a constant communion with the unseen world, the existence of which she realized to an extent which not even those who saw the most of her could appreciate. They could only perceive that prayer and faith and love were sustained and kept genuine by active work, and that, in short, as one of her humble friends testified after her death, "Sister Dora was as like the Lord Jesus Christ as any human creature could be." To all the poor ignorant beings whose souls she tried to reach by means of their maimed bodies, she was indeed the personification of their idea of a Saviour. But to her own mind, as she sat in judgment on her past life, when, as she herself afterwards expressed it, "the decree had gone forth, 'Thou

shalt die, and not live,'" there appeared to be still so much left undone, so many opportunities wasted, and so much time unredeemed, that she set the whole energy of her body and soul to work to make the very utmost of every moment which was left her. All her fortitude, all her self-control, must, she knew, be called to her aid now.

She worked harder than ever, and writes to a friend, who was, of course, entirely unaware of her condition: "I grudge every moment I must spend in taking care of this body;" and again: "I fairly grudge myself the time which must be spent in sleep." (This time she certainly did contrive to reduce to a minimum.) Again: "One's body seems to drag one down." Her friends were disposed to think she was wanting in gratitude for that body, to the beautiful form of which she undoubtedly owed no small measure of her success. But she by no means altogether despised this gift; and that she really recognized the influence which her appearance gained for her over those with whom she came in contact, is proved by her evident fear lest small-pox should deprive her of some of her personal attractions. Her labours now became so severe, so altogether beyond reason in the eyes of the committee, that they remonstrated more than once with her, telling her she would kill herself, and entreating her to allow them to furnish her with efficient help. She declined every offer of this kind, partly because

the risk of the discovery of her secret was not so great while she lived comparatively alone in the hospital, partly because she dreaded anything which should in the least interfere with that mission work, for which she had so short a time left.

Her little pony carriage was now used nearly every day. From six p.m. till between ten and eleven at night, she drove to see patients who could not be received into the hospital. She visited all classes—from the respectable, down to what she called the "ragtags" of the town. These last were her favourites, and her chief happiness now seemed to consist in spending the night by the bedside of wretched, dying patients, soothing, exhorting, encouraging; going almost down with them into the dark valley, truly representing unto them their Saviour. She was sometimes fearful, perhaps not without reason, lest they should cling too exclusively to her, and to the human support which she afforded them. Yet her religion was eminently spiritual. She thought too little of outward forms, and rarely, if ever, cared to teach others to depend upon them. To one who tried to follow her, at however great a distance, in her work of rousing people sunk in vice and wretchedness, to a sense of moral responsibility, she gave the wholesome advice, "When you want to lead any one to Jesus, remember you must point, and take care not to stand in the way yourself." The active part she had taken

in the public mission had opened to her many doors which had before been closed. Every back slum in Walsall now became familiar ground to her. The faces which met her there wore a look of welcome and of friendship, nay, even of respect, in return for her smiles of recognition. The midnight classes for women, which she continued to conduct during part of the winter of 1875–76, gave her golden opportunities, of which she made the fullest use.

A place in Walsall, well known to the police and to other night-birds, called Marsh Lane, is infamous on many accounts, but chiefly as the scene of Irish fights. One night, as Sister Dora passed the entrance to this lane, she saw a motley crowd collected, and in the midst a bloody fight was going on, with which the police were not venturing to interfere. She immediately turned down the lane, and plunging through the crowd, which made way for her right and left, she took possession of a high doorstep, where her appearance alone was enough to gain her the attention she desired. She addressed the crowd in her usual fashion, entreating, exhorting, flinging well-aimed raillery at the combatants, with whom she was, no doubt, personally acquainted. They stood for a moment or two abashed, like two furious bulldogs with their tails between their legs, and then, with the tenacity of the same creatures, again rushed upon each other,

urged on by the sympathetic cries of the crowd. In one moment Sister Dora had quitted her door-step, and had thrown herself between the wild animals, holding them each back with an arm which either of the men could have broken as easily as he could have snapped his tobacco-pipe. But her appeal was all-powerful; neither combatants nor crowd gave her a word of disrespect, much less of insult, and as if they were forced to acknowledge a supernatural power amongst them, they allowed her to win the day, and the fight was at an end.

Another night her way to a patient's house lay through one of the worst streets in Walsall. As she passed along it, a man whom she did not know ran out of a low public-house, calling after her, "Sister, you're wanted." "What is it?" she replied. "Why, they've been fighting, and there's a man hurt desperate." Even Sister Dora hesitated; such was the reputation of the public-house that she hardly knew whether she ought not to expect to be murdered if she should go in there unprotected in the dead of night. "But what does it matter if I *am* murdered?" was her next thought; and she turned and followed the man. As she entered the door of the public room the noise of mingled groans and curses which met her ears made her shudder. To her astonishment every hat was taken off as she appeared on the scene; a way was respectfully made

for her to the side of the wounded man, and silence was kept around while she did all she could for him.

This may well complete the history of her victory over the hearts of her fellow-men, a victory gained by the abiding influence of those words, which were deeply graven on her heart, and constantly on her lips: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Every one must admire the courage which she displayed, but those who know by experience what the lowest of the masses in our large towns are like—how all decency, and even every vestige of humanity, seem to be stamped out of their nature—will alone be in a condition to appreciate her power. That power should more properly be called the utmost cultivation of all her faculties. This enabled her first to see the image of God, defiled and darkened though it might be, impressed upon every living soul, to feel her kinship with it, to lay her hand, not upon the defilements and impurity, but, through the means of her infinite love and tenderness, upon the one spot yet capable of being healed, thus kindling the faintest spark into a living flame.

Her expeditions at night, in the cold and wet, during the early part of 1876, brought on a return of the acute inflammation from which she had suffered ten years before, and for a short time she was again dangerously ill. Was it strange that

she now longed and prayed for death as she had never prayed before? No wonder that her heart almost failed her when, weak and ill, she looked forward to lonely months of suffering under a painful disease from which, as she well knew, death alone could release her. But, with recovery, her indomitable spirit returned, and no one who saw her in the wards of her little hospital, or surrounded by out-patients, for each of whom she had a cheerful word; or speeding with eager feet on her missions of mercy during the hours of night—could have guessed that her nearly superhuman energy was sustained by the knowledge that life was all but over for her, and that, to use words often on her lips when she spoke to others, "the night was coming, in which no man can work."

Meanwhile the new hospital was slowly rising on the old site, and she threw herself into the various plans and suggestions for the building as vigorously as ever. The war between Turkey and Bulgaria also occupied a great deal of her interest, and her longing to go out and nurse the wounded was as earnest as it had been in the war of 1870. Even Walsall, with its tens of thousands of inhabitants, was but a corner of the world to her who took a vivid interest in the life of nations, in the struggle of parties in the State, and in politics. This was the more remarkable, because,

as every one knows who has tried it, there is no more engrossing occupation than nursing—no such complete "little world," in every sense, as that contained within the walls of a hospital. She writes to a friend, after she had taken a short holiday: "I still keep in the same mind about going to the war, if only I had the strength. I stayed in London with two ladies who had just returned from the Servian war. I dropped in for their being fêted. It was very pleasant to meet nice people, but the evening's entertainment did not send me to bed with so glad a spirit as my work amongst the patients."

At the close of the year 1877 she invited all her old patients to a Christmas dinner in the temporary hospital, which she gave at her own cost. She felt nearly sure it would be her last Christmas upon earth, and she wished them all to remember the occasion after she was gone. There was a large gathering, and much merriment. Old and young, rich and poor, patients and nurses, met together to see and to be welcomed by their dear Sister Dora, and to hear her speak to them, as she alone could speak. Only one young man among those who had been invited, one of the patients whom she liked best of all, did not turn up; but on New-Year's Day, 1878, he went to visit her. She asked him reproachfully why he had not come to dinner on Christmas Day? She had missed him; it had not

been half a Christmas to her without E——, and she was wondering and conjecturing all day what could have kept him away. This incident was told, almost with a kind of despair, to the present writer, by this patient himself. He added, "No, I didn't go, and I shall never have another chance."

During the rest of this winter Sister Dora's journeys in her pony-carriage at night were extended as far as Sutton, a little town about seven miles from Walsall. She was always driven on these occasions by the porter of the hospital, for the nights were sometimes so severely cold that it was all she could do to keep herself even tolerably warm, and she would have been too much chilled had she driven the carriage herself. Twice on the road to Sutton she and her companion were attacked by men, who evidently had evil intentions. Once, just as they were entering Sutton, two ruffians sprang out of a hedge, when just as they had seized the pony's head, a man on horseback appeared round the corner, causing them to fly. Sister Dora was by no means deterred from continuing her drives to Sutton, and not very long after this first adventure, as they were driving rather more slowly than usual on one dark night, a man suddenly rushed across the road, and ran after the carriage. The porter whipped up the pony, and Sister Dora, turning round, saw that the man had a large thick stick

in his hand. "I had only time," she said, "for a short prayer, when the stick was brought down heavily on the back of the carriage. I had leant instinctively to one side as I said my prayer, and thus my head escaped the blow which was intended for it."

The porter, in describing this affair, always stoutly declares that the men did not know whom they were attacking. "Why, there isn't a man alive as would touch Sister Dora to do her any harm; they only knew the pony-carriage went constantly on the same road, and thought they might get something from the people inside it." The porter, who is an intelligent man, looks back upon these drives by night in the cold and in the dark as some of the jolliest hours of his life. "She never stopped talking to me," he would say, "telling me stories, and many times I wish I could recollect her way of putting things, but the words won't come to me. We had patients all about, and drove as many as eleven or twelve miles of a night. Once we drove to Lichfield and back to a midnight service in the cathedral. It took us a good part of the night, but Sister Dora, she never seemed to feel the cold, nor to be a bit tired the next day."

Her friend Mr. Twigg, who had been very ill, had gone to Sutton for change of air, and she constantly visited him. Her visits were a refreshment

to him, and he characteristically remarked, "I had rather be beaten by Sister Dora than caressed by any one else." Besides this, there had been an accident to some navvies working on a new line of railroad, and three of these were lying seriously hurt at the little Sutton inn. They became her patients, like everybody else within reach. She visited all the towns and villages within a radius of ten miles from Walsall. In most of them she had patients; in all of them she found sin-laden and weary souls, who eagerly sought her help.

But, as a friend wrote after her death, "her good work was not confined to Walsall and its neighbourhood. Sinners sought her help from various parts. She ever had a true woman's loving, sympathizing heart, and no one in distress who sought counsel of her, ever applied in vain." Towards the early spring the symptoms of her disease increased so rapidly that her medical adviser made it his urgent request that he might not be left with the sole responsibility of the case. At his suggestion, therefore, she consulted Mr. Crompton, of Birmingham, from whose opinion on a surgical case she knew there could be no appeal. His view confirmed that of her friend, and enjoining upon him also the most absolute secrecy, she returned to her work. There was no perceptible difference in her appearance, no signs of illness or of suffering about her, and yet the cancer which had established itself was in-

creasing, so that surgical dressing became necessary. She kept, however, to her resolution, dressing the wound herself; and although she was at that very time watching three cases of the same kind, in different stages—one that of an in-patient at the hospital, the others out-patients, whose wounds she regularly dressed—yet she never swerved from her purpose. None of her family, or of her friends, nor a single soul in Walsall, had the slightest idea that she was not in robust health. It is true she had a cough, but she attributed it, laughingly, to her owlish habits of wandering at unearthly hours in all weathers.

One night the doctor hastily fetched her to look at a child who was in the last stage of diphtheria. As a forlorn hope he performed the operation of tracheotomy—making an incision, that is, in the child's throat, and inserting a tube in hopes that the choking might be relieved. Sister Dora knelt down by the bed, put her mouth to the incision, and deliberately cleared the child's throat of the poisonous mucous which was choking it. The child ultimately recovered, to die of another disease! Sister Dora suffered for three weeks from diphtheritic sore throat, but escaped without any further mischief.

One night, during some of the last weeks spent in the temporary hospital, Sister Dora, who had, for a wonder, gone to bed early, was awakened

out of a sound sleep by feeling herself violently shaken. It was the night-nurse, who was calling out, "Sister, Sister, do get up; there's a man in the house, and I can't get him out! We shall all be killed!" Sister Dora hurried on her clothes and ran downstairs, to find herself confronted by a flashy-looking man, with conspicuous rings and watch-chain, who was standing in the hall. He asked her if that was not the Cottage Hospital. She replied, "Yes, it is: will you tell me what your business here is?" The man said he thought he could be accommodated with a bed, perhaps. "Oh dear, no," replied she; "we only give sick people beds here." "Well, anyhow, I've come," returned the fellow, "and I mean to stay." "But," said the Sister, "two people have to be consulted about that, and I, for one, do not mean to let you stay." He advanced towards her, and she trusted that he did not see, in the dim light, how, in spite of her bold words, she was shaking with fright. "Do you think *you're* going to prevent me from spending the night here if I choose?" returned he. "Of course I can't prevent you from staying in the passage," she replied; "but you will have to force your way past me before you get any further;" and so saying, she stood on the last step of the staircase, and spread her arms across to bar the way. He seated himself coolly on a bench in the hall. Meanwhile, their conversation had been inter-

spersed with frantic cries from the night-nurse, who stood at the top of the stairs: 'Sister, do leave him and come upstairs; we shall all be murdered —we shall indeed;" to which she only received for answer, "Hold your tongue, you goose!" ("I could have beaten the woman," Sister Dora said afterwards, when she told this story.)

How long she and her unwelcome visitor remained watching each other, she could not tell; she only knew that she began to feel very weary and to fear that he really meant to fulfil his threat of spending the night in the hospital, when he made a sudden dart down the passage in the direction of the kitchen. But she was too quick for him, and in a moment she was again facing him, and barring his way with her tall form. Of course he could easily have knocked her down, but instead of doing so, to her surprise he suddenly turned round, saying, "You're a brave one. I've accomplished what I came for; I wish you good evening," and walked out at the door, which Sister Dora eagerly bolted and locked behind him. Then she went to vent her indignation upon the night-nurse, first for having let the man in, and next for being such a coward. The nurse vindicated herself by saying that she had only held the door ajar, till the man said "Accident," upon which she opened it wider, and he rushed in and shut it before she could stop him. Not many weeks after this strange

adventure, Sister Dora received an anonymous letter of apology, in which was enclosed a donation of one pound to the hospital. The committee tried in every way to discover the offender, but in vain; and it was supposed that he belonged to the "swell mob" of Walsall, and had made a bet that he would frighten Sister Dora, and spend a night in the hospital.

An idea prevailed that she could not be frightened, but this was a mistake. She often felt fear, although, with one curious exception, she never allowed it to influence her actions. The one exception was an uncontrollable terror of dogs, probably to be accounted for by the many serious cases of dog-bites, with which from time to time she had had to deal. She would shrink behind a companion if she met even a very small cur in the streets; but towards the end of her life she so far overcame her antipathy as to accept a present of a little curly dog, and to let it live in the house, although she never seemed to like to touch it.

In the month of June, 1878, Sister Dora went away for a fortnight's holiday, leaving an old friend in charge of her patients. Almost immediately on her return, typhoid fever broke out in the temporary hospital in Bridgeman Street, and it was found necessary at once to close the building. Sister Dora was thus unexpectedly set at

liberty; but besides her numerous out-patients, a matter of business prevented her from at once leaving Walsall, and taking the much-needed rest which seemed at last to offer itself. A short time before a woman had been brought into the hospital who had fallen down on the railway line, and had been injured by a train. In compensation for these injuries she sued the company for damages. It became at once a question, whether she was under the influence of drink at the time of her accident or not, and the evidence of the house-surgeon and of Sister Dora were taken on opposite sides; the doctor declaring that the woman was brought in sober, Sister Dora affirming that she was drunk. The case eventually came on at the Stafford assizes, and meanwhile Sister Dora remained at Walsall, not thinking it worth her while to go to her friends, who lived far away, until the trial should be over. The end of the lawsuit was, that the woman won triumphantly, and Sister Dora gave a most characteristic account of the affair. "Oh, but they are a pretty set, those barristers!" she said; "there was one who wanted to make me say black was white, and then, because I wouldn't, he tried to make me believe I was not Sister Dora. Rather too much!"

As soon as this business was settled, she prepared to leave her lodgings in Walsall, but first she treated all her former patients whom she

could gather, together with the night-nurses and servants attached to the hospital, to a day at Lichfield. They describe it as having been the most charming of all their many delightful expeditions with her. She was in unusually high spirits, talking and laughing with them in the train, and actually jumping out to gather some flowers which grew on the railway banks while the train stopped unexpectedly. She took them over the cathedral, showing them everything herself, with her wonted care for their enjoyment.

In the month of August she finally left Walsall, feeling convinced in her own mind that she should never come back to work there again. She packed up all her own goods and chattels, carefully separating them from those belonging to the hospital, and taking so much pains about it that several of the committee could not conceal their astonishment, one even saying to her, "Why, Sister, one would think you were never coming back to work the new hospital." To which she answered laconically, "Perhaps I never may; it's as well to be prepared for anything that may happen." The building of the new hospital, like most such undertakings, was a more tedious business than had been anticipated, and was not likely to be ready till October.

CHAPTER IX.

VISITS TO PARIS AND LONDON. INCREASING ILLNESS AND RETURN TO WALSALL: 1878.

"But she in the calm depths her way could take,
Where in bright bowers immortal forms abide,
Beneath the weltering of the restless tide."

THE first use Sister Dora made of her freedom was to visit some of her nieces, who were spending the summer in the Isle of Man. She was in even higher spirits than usual, and the only indication which her relations observed of any want of strength was that she did not walk so far or so fast as they had known her to do during former visits to them. Bathing in the sea, which had always been one of her greatest delights, she still seemed to enjoy, notwithstanding her condition. She taught her nieces to swim, with great vigour, and played all kinds of tricks upon them while they were in the water, suddenly swimming after them, and holding them under the waves till they had lost breath. Altogether they had never seen her apparently fuller

of life and health. During this holiday a man in the neighbourhood had his fingers nearly crushed off by a thrashing-machine. Sister Dora, on hearing of the accident, went and sewed them up. The man afterwards went to show his hand to a surgeon, who said, "Why, my man, what do you come here for? Surely you have already been to a doctor?" The man explained that "it was only a lady who did his hand up, and he thought he had better have a doctor see to it as well." "Humph!" replied the doctor; "I should very much like to see that lady. Where does she come from?"

In the autumn she went to Paris to see the Exhibition, and especially to study the wonderful inventions in the way of surgical appliances and operating instruments which were there exhibited. She was delighted with all she saw, and she abundantly proved, by her keen enjoyment of everything new to her, that her freshness of spirit had not deserted her. By the end of September she was in London, where she intended to study Professor Lister's treatment of wounds, with a view to the employment of his method in the Walsall Hospital. On September the 27th she wrote to a friend: "I am busy now with wonderful cases." She stayed at a kind of private nursing home in Fitzroy Square, where she was permitted to attend Mr. Lister's operations, and to watch his subsequent treatment of his patients.

All this while her own disease was steadily gaining ground, making rapid strides, and causing her intense suffering, which she found herself no longer able to conceal from those about her. The cough, which had troubled her for some months past, increased so terribly that one of the London doctors proposed to examine her chest. She was terrified at the sudden prospect of the discovery by a stranger of her long-hidden secret; flight seemed the only safety, and all unfit as she was, she travelled alone to Birmingham to consult her former adviser, Mr. Crompton. The hurried journey, combined with anxiety, suffering, and distress of mind, brought on fatal symptoms, and it was thought that she would never leave the hotel at Birmingham, whither she had gone, alive. Mr. Crompton, who felt a sincere regard and admiration for her, and speaks of her self-control, courage, and devotion, as having been "more than mortal," wished to remove her to his own house, where he hoped she might live for a few days. But she steadily declined to go anywhere except to Walsall, repeating, "Let me die among my own people." The surgeon of the Walsall Hospital was communicated with, and on October the 8th he removed Sister Dora to Walsall in his own carriage. The committee of the hospital, on hearing of her serious illness, had engaged a small house for her, as the new building was by no means fitted to receive her.

On October the 7th she wrote from Queen's Hotel, Birmingham, to a clergyman, a very dear friend, begging him to come and see her as soon as she should return to Walsall. She says: "I wonder what you will say when you hear the decree has gone forth, 'Sister, put thy house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live.' Such has been the verdict of the doctors; such is my own feeling this time. I have been laid up here since last Thursday, carefully nursed by strangers. I am going to Walsall; if able to be moved, to-morrow. They have taken a house for me near the new hospital. Will you, if you can, come and see me on Wednesday? . . . There is only Mount Calvary to climb, by the ladder of sickness. I can join in the words of our beautiful Prayer-book, 'Render unto Him humble thanks for his Fatherly visitation.' . . . Do pray, dear brother, that, as my pain increases, so may my faith and patience. . . . I have not had two hours' sleep, for four days and nights, but in the midst of the fiery furnace there was a form like unto the Son of God. . . . I am *not* to write; this I have accomplished with great difficulty.

"Yours faithfully,

"SISTER DORA."

The Walsall doctor was asked to observe absolute secrecy as to the nature of her disease, and a former servant at the hospital, a good-hearted girl, but

nothing of a nurse, was the only attendant she would allow to be about her. Extraordinary to relate, not a soul suspected that there was anything to conceal, and it was commonly supposed in Walsall that Sister Dora was dying of consumption. The news spread like wildfire, not only in the city, but in the surrounding districts, where her very name was a household word. "Her'll get well," was the general conviction; "her *never* can be going to die." The calamity seemed too great, the incongruity between that luxuriance of life and apparent health, and the silence and coldness of death, too impossible. They had learnt to look upon her as a superior being—literally, a strong angel, sent especially to befriend them; to whose arm they might always cling with confidence and safety, and who was not to be touched by the ordinary troubles of humanity. The first incredulity was succeeded by a kind of blank despair, when, in answer to their heartfelt inquiries, they received the answer, "No hope; only a question of time," and the door of the little house was besieged by anxious inquirers, many of whom went on hoping against hope.

At first a notion seemed to be encouraged by the medical man that she might recover so far as, on a very warm and sunny day, to be able to be carried to the door of the new hospital, which was fast approaching completion, in order that, with her own lips, she might declare the building to be

open. But soon even this hope vanished, and from the time that she took up her abode in the little hired house, she never left her bed. Her sufferings increased daily, and she soon ceased to be able to take any solid food, as incessant sickness and consequent terrible exhaustion set in. The nights were worse than the days; she could only obtain sleep by means of opiates, the strength of which it was necessary constantly to increase, until at last none of them seemed to have any effect upon her. But neither her strength of mind, nor her resolution to keep her disease a secret from everybody but her doctor, forsook her, and for many weeks she continued herself to dress the wound, which was now of terrible extent, with only his assistance. She would not allow any one to send for the members of her own family, not even for her sisters and nieces, who would any or all of them gladly have come to nurse her, and this because of the fixed determination that, until her death, no one should know of her real condition. Her old servant, Mrs. H——, who was in service in the neighbourhood, was allowed by her employers to nurse her dear Sister Dora during the night, alternately with two other of the night-nurses who had been employed at the hospital. To Mrs. H——, Sister Dora was obliged to reveal the true nature of her disease, for, as her weakness increased, she was forced to submit to have her wound dressed when the doctor was not available.

It is difficult to give a reason for what appears an almost senseless and useless mystery on her part, and there was a wilfulness about her determination which it seemed that neither her own lonely agony, nor the distress which she must have known she was causing the members of her own family, could shake. Her own sisters even, were not aware at first that her illness was at all serious, but as soon as they heard how much worse she had become, two of them went at once to Walsall. They stayed a week there, and then, as Sister Dora, from her almost frantic desire for the concealment of her complaint, would not allow them to nurse her, they sorrowfully took leave of her.

She told her doctors that she would not give people a handle for saying that she had killed herself by her mode of life, or, as ignorant persons always will believe to be possible, that she had "caught" cancer from some of her patients. But the spirit within her was not altered, and those who knew her well, cannot help seeing in her, on her death-bed, the same proud and wilful reticence, the same determined following of her own way at all costs, which marked her character so strongly during the days of health and strength. She had never in her life given way to physical suffering, but had tried always to act as if, for her, it did not exist. In this part of her nature, good and evil were strangely mixed; it is impossible

for any human observer to separate them, nor can it be necessary to do so.

The following short note was dictated to her lawyer, in whose hands she had always placed the management of her money affairs, on one of the early days of October:—

"DEAR MR. SLATER,

"The enclosed account of the carriage is come; will you kindly send a cheque for the amount to my brother-in-law, as I am too ill to see to it myself? The cold waters of death are fast closing around me; only now and then I rally up and know people. Extreme weakness is so painful to me. Every now and then little bills crop up, and I fear they will do so, to your annoyance, after I am gone. What a great deal of trouble I have been to you! But I keep praying God will reward you, and I trust you and yours will find such a friend when you need him.

"Yours very gratefully,

"SISTER DORA."

It is not wonderful that her first feeling, when she was told of the speedy approach of death, should have been one of great joy and relief, that the hard struggle which she had kept up for the last twenty months was at last to have an end; and she expressed her longing for rest from suffer-

ing and labour to more than one friend, in the words of one of her favourite hymns—"Rest comes at length, though life be long and weary." Her pleasure in hymns of the slightly sensational order, was second only to her love for the Holy Scriptures themselves. On her death-bed she constantly begged those who visited her to repeat or to read to her some of Faber's hymns, saying, that often, when her heart had felt cold, she had sat down on the floor before she went to bed at night, to repeat and refresh herself with them, and that they had been the dearest companions of her solitary life. On October the 13th she wrote the last letter with her own hand to a friend who had worked with her. After this date, her letters were dictated.

"My Dear Miss ——,

"It is 2.30 a.m., and I cannot sleep, so I am going to do a naughty thing, and write to you. Thank you, dear, for the kind sympathy expressed in your letter. I should like to have seen you, dearest, once again. I did think we should have had some working days together in our new hospital. I was anything but 'forbearing,' dear; I was overbearing, and I am truly sorry for it now. I look back on my life and see 'nothing but leaves.' Oh, my darling, let me speak to you from my death-bed, and say, Watch in all you do that you

have a single aim—*God's* honour and glory. 'I came not to work My own works, but the works of Him that sent Me.' Look upon working as a privilege. Do not look upon nursing in the way they do so much nowadays, as an art or science, but as work done for Christ. As you touch each patient, think it is Christ Himself, and then virtue will come out of the touch to yourself. I have felt that myself, when I have had a particularly loathsome patient. Be very full of the glad tidings, and you will tell others. You cannot give what you have not got. Do not go in so much for training as for *experience.* I assure you I was unlearning every year what I learnt the last. My love to Miss ——. I know not where she is, or I would write to her. My heart is so full of thankfulness for the Good Shepherd's tender care and love towards me. . . . Oh, my dear, the peace does indeed pass all understanding. I have so longed to go home. . . . I am so happy. I have got such a dear home, loving nurses, anxious friends, and oh, such luxuries! I wish I could share my good things with other sick ones, my illness seems so nice. It is *hopeless* (I use that word merely technically), so they don't tease me with medicines and remedies, and there is no fluctuation of hopes and fears. I have not a care; it is all sunshine. God has taken away the fear of death, and all sorrow at parting with life. I can enjoy readings, etc.,

and have not so much pain. I am so glad to be at Walsall amongst all I love. My room is almost a garden of flowers—and oh, the grapes! they would fill a vinery. I should like to see your dear father. I am so glad I had that delightful little peep of you in the summer. Give love to A——. I did intend calling upon her when in town, but had not the time. I had the privilege of seeing Mr. Lister do some wonderful operations. Give your dear mother some loving message; also dear S—— and A——. And now, dear, an awful sharp pain in the chest makes me drop my pen, so I can only add much love, and may God bless your work, and have you in His holy keeping. So prays your loving friend,

"Sister Dora."

The joy and peace so abundantly expressed in this letter were succeeded by great depression, and what may even be called "a horrible dread" of the King of terrors seemed to overwhelm her. "I cannot pray, I cannot think; I sadly fear I shall be lost. I can only trust." Her strong, living faith in a personal Saviour, carried her through even these deep waters, but she never regained her first hopeful, thankful spirit. She clung rather, like a drowning man, to One stronger than herself, and it seemed to those around her as if the discipline of a whole lifetime was being compressed into those

last few weeks. Her bodily sufferings increased, till all her proud nature gave way, and she confessed that they were torture. "But," she would add, "I want it all; the more I suffer, the more I feel I need it. I am in God's hands now." She desired that a large crucifix might be placed on the wall exactly opposite her bed, and on this her eyes were constantly fixed, although she said once to a friend, "I feel sometimes I dare not look there. I cannot bear the sight of His sufferings; my own sink into nothing by the side of them; and yet I am *so* impatient."

Her one remaining earthly anxiety, was to find a successor to herself, who would undertake the organization and working of the new hospital, and whom she might see before she died. While the committee were trying in vain to find any one willing or fit to take such a post, an old friend and fellow-worker of Sister Dora was at the new building, preparing it to the best of her power, for the speedy reception of patients; and another friend, a former lady-pupil of her own, promised temporarily to take charge of the nursing department, after the opening, until a permanent head could be obtained. She was thus relieved from immediate anxiety, and on November the 4th the new building was declared by the Mayor to be open "in the name of Sister Dora."

The ceremony, which was extremely simple, was

a sad and solemn one to every soul present, and during the short prayers which were read in the lobby of the hospital, many tears were shed. The Mayor's short address was touching from its simplicity, and from the good taste and feeling with which he spoke, in a trembling voice, of the "grief and sorrow too deep for words" which all present carried in their hearts for that "dear lady" who could never bless their new hospital with her presence. Her childlike pleasure in little things did not, even to the last, forsake her, for she expressed delight at an ornamental silvered key, in a velvet case, which had been sent her by the hospital committee, with a request that she would herself, if she felt able, give it into the hands of the Mayor, and thus empower him to open the new building, *in her name.* She received many visitors on that day. Among them were the Mayor, many members of the hospital committee, and Lady Hatherton; indeed, she made it a general rule to refuse admission to no one who desired to see her, if by an exercise of self-control she could speak to them.

Whenever she rallied from extreme weakness so as to be able to recognize her friends, and to talk like herself, she began to make her accustomed jokes; and so strong was this habit that many of her old patients, who of course did not know of her mortal complaint, still declared that she was

"*that* cheerful and jolly, that they were sure she would come round." Sometimes her visitors, as they were waiting in the little adjoining room, could hear her groaning in agony, and praying aloud for patience; and yet a minute or two afterwards, when she had summoned them, she would receive them with outstretched hands, and a face beaming with smiles, and would ask them about their own concerns, showing all her old vivid interest and sympathy in her friends' affairs. On her best days, as she called them, she was exactly her old self, keeping her ordinary visitors in constant laughter, and sending them away in a maze of astonishment at the vivacity which pain and disease entirely failed to quench. Those with whom she was on more intimate terms, although they were indeed surprised at the lively interest which she still kept up, not only in matters connected with the hospital, but in public affairs, saw better—how often under jokes and laughter were hidden pain of body and accompanying distress of mind. She now welcomed human support and sympathy, without which she had proudly passed her life. Sometimes she could not bear to be left alone at night for a moment, and when, owing to the severity of her suffering, she could no longer pray for herself, she would urge upon her nurse that she should pray unceasingly, aloud by her bedside. "I am not half

so good or so patient as many of those I have nursed," she would cry out.

Those who nursed her during the nights say she spent the greater part of them in praying aloud, or in regretting all that she had left undone. One of her nurses tried to comfort her by saying, "Why, Sister, only think of all the good you have done to us poor folk. It was through you I first learnt to pray; what should I have been without you?" With a gesture almost of despair Sister Dora answered, "*Don't* talk of what I have done; I have never done half what I might. I am not nearly so good as you are, Mrs. R——." Sometimes she was possessed with a longing to go back to her old life, but this was rare; usually she was contented to lie and hear minute details, from the ladies who were nursing in the new hospital, about the patients who were beginning to fill it. From her lips they took down the orders for all the necessary details of china, linen, etc., with which the institution was as yet unfurnished. One of the nurses told her that a man with a broken back had been brought in. "Then," she said, "look here, and I will show you how to move him in bed," quickly doubling up a corner of her sheet, and laying her finger in it to represent the helpless patient, as in her short, concise, professional manner she taught how it might be done, without hurting

the injured back. Another day she had the apparatus for the treatment of wounds after Mr. Lister's principle, laid upon her bed, and with the doctor went eagerly into its working, impressing upon him her strong desire that the method should be employed, as soon as possible, at Walsall Hospital.

CHAPTER X.

LAST DAYS AND DEATH: 1878.

"Angels, thy old friends there shall greet thee,
Glad at their own home now to meet thee,
All thy good works which went before,
And waited for thee at the door,
Shall own thee there; and all in one
Weave a constellation
Of crowns, with which the King, thy spouse,
Shall build up thy triumphant brows."

TOWARDS the end of November she grew suddenly much worse, and appeared, to the relief of all who watched her, to be dying; but again, to the amazement of her doctor, her strong vitality asserted itself, and she rallied, coming back painfully, to ever-increasing torture.

She wrote, on November the 27th, to a friend, after thanking for flowers which had been sent her: "My cough is terrible; it will not cease, and I am so troubled with sickness. . . . Do pray for me, dearest, that I may have patience to endure unto the end whatever He shall lay upon me, and that, when I pass through the dark Valley, He may fold

me in His arms. Write to me when you can, for I do like a letter, to feel that I am not cut off from the outer world." Again, on November the 30th: "How can I thank you for the sweet, loving letters which find their way so continually to cheer my sick-bed! And they do cheer it, for they speak of such true heart-sympathy, entering into, and thinking of, all my pains and sufferings. Pray that my patience may not fail. . . . My nights are most distressing, owing to the cough, and now I care for nothing except water, which is my one cry all day long; so I think I cannot live long upon that. God bless you, dearest.

"Your loving

"Sister Dora."

The doctor relates how, when he first brought her back to Walsall, she said to him, after he had examined her, exactly as if she had been asking his opinion upon some one else, "Well, doctor, how long do you give me?" He replied, gravely, "I give you a fortnight." When the appointed time was over, Sister Dora's eyes used to dance with all their old brightness as he entered her room. "Well, and what do you say now, eh?" she inquired; and as the days passed, and still she lived on, her enjoyment of his mistake became keener, and it seemed really to afford her delight that she had, as she expressed it, "done the doctor again!" When

she actually came out, from what had seemed to be the Valley of the Shadow of Death itself, she tormented him unmercifully every time he appeared, rallying him on his "valuable opinion," until he was at his wits' end, and could only reply, "You are an exception to every rule."

Sometimes she would begin to recall humorous incidents in her life, laughing heartily, but always bringing on a terrible fit of coughing. "Who would think," she said to a clergyman who was sitting by her on one of these occasions, "that I was on my death-bed!" He replied incredulously, "Are you sure you are, Sister?" "Unless God works a miracle for me," she answered. To this same friend she remarked, "If I went back to teach patients again, I should dwell more than ever, on the necessity of building our hopes on Jesus only."

This clergyman writes, speaking of his visits to her in her last illness: "On two occasions she put a word in my mouth. One Sunday afternoon she asked me what my evening sermon was to be about. I told her. She said, 'Tell them to work while it is called to-day, for the night cometh, when no man can work.' It was the day when the annual collections were made for the Cottage Hospital, and in the course of my appeal on its behalf, I gave her message. The other occasion was a Sunday evening, when all the cabmen in the town had promised, at Sister Dora's request, to attend our mission-room

service. Before evening service, I was with her, and she said, 'Oh, speak to them on this text, "What think ye of Christ?" Make it ring in their ears.'

"They all came except two, who were unavoidably away on duty, and I preached from the text suggested. She had great sympathy with 'poor cabby.' Every year she used to give them all some small present—a warm muffler, a pair of driving-gloves, or something of the kind. Before her illness, she had ordered about thirty pairs of warmly lined gloves, intending them for a Christmas box; but when it became evident that she would scarcely live till Christmas, she asked me to call the men together and present the gloves, with a few words from her. They were much affected, and in their rough but hearty way tried to express their feelings, giving me messages of affection to convey to her, and in every way showing their sorrow at the thought that she would never be amongst them again."

On December the 6th, Sister Dora's last anxiety for her beloved hospital was set at rest by the arrival of a lady, Sister Ellen, a complete stranger to her, who had offered voluntarily to undertake the work of nursing there; and from the first moment of their meeting, a confidence was established between the two women, which proved an unexpected blessing to both of them. Sister Ellen, who had not a great many patients in the hospital, devoted herself to nursing Sister Dora, who had now

become entirely helpless, and who had not hitherto known the comfort of really skilled nursing. "Oh," she exclaimed, as she was moved and lifted into a fresh position, after having her wound dressed by her new nurse, "if my patients can only be nursed like this I shall be *more* than satisfied."

She was scarcely ever without a visitor during the day, and often the little parlour adjoining her bedroom was full of people waiting to be admitted. Her unselfishness in this respect was remarkable, and many friends, high and low, rich and poor alike, have cause to be grateful for the example of her death-bed. One who was constantly with her, writes:—

"I shall never forget the unselfishness, brightness, and patience, with which she bore her long trial. Often, when she was suffering so much that I was afraid to do anything but watch her silently, she would ask some question about my home concerns, and go on talking of them with as much interest as though she were perfectly free from pain. One of her greatest pleasures was reading letters from her friends, and dictating answers to them, in which she would make as little as she truthfully could of her own sufferings, and show the liveliest interest in any little thing that concerned her friends. Her sufferings were sad to see; but even when she was moaning with pain, which, she said, was like the cutting of a knife, she would go on dictating, as

best she could, between her moans. At other times she was so drowsy that she would fall asleep before the letter was finished, or while I was reading to her; this distressed her even more than the pain, and she would beg me most earnestly to keep her awake. I do not think she had the times of extreme happiness which some people have felt when near death, for she said, 'The suffering is so real, so present, I seem scarcely able to think of the future happiness.' . . . Her sorrow was, that she could not realize God's presence more, and her fear was, lest she should seem impatient. She spoke most decidedly against the idea that we need any one to go between the soul and Christ, and I shall never forget her bright, beautiful smile as she listened to the words, 'He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life,' saying, with the deepest earnestness, 'That is just what I want.' . . . I feel that I cannot give you any true idea of those last hours that I spent with her, or of the vivid remembrance I have of her, as her brave and loving spirit waited for the moment when God would call her to the full, unclouded daylight of eternity, into the dawn of which she seemed already to have entered."

The testimony of this friend is valuable, for it shows that although Sister Dora during the latter years of her life felt her need of, and occasionally resorted to, that confession of sins to a human

being, which the Church of England sanctions but does not encourage, the simplicity of her faith remained unalterably clear.

A rumour was circulated after Sister Dora's death, in Walsall, and indeed throughout Staffordshire, that she became a Roman Catholic on her death-bed, and that she was then baptized into communion with that Church.

It is sufficient to say here, that such a report is untrue, and that she received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper from the hands of a clergyman of the Church of England, more than once, after the date of the visit of a Roman Catholic priest, with whom she had been acquainted in former years, and from whose visit to her on her death-bed the report most probably originated.

Since the first edition of this book was published, this gentleman, in a letter published in the second edition of the biography, as well as the Roman Catholic priest at Walsall, in a letter printed in a local paper, have both admitted that Sister Dora never became a member of the Roman Catholic Church.

During the last three weeks of her life, the course of circulation in her right arm became impeded, and consequently the arm and hand swelled to a painful extent. As she lay, or rather sat, propped up with pillows—for otherwise she could not breathe—her swollen arm supported on a cushion, she seemed to

have regained her youthful loveliness of form and colouring, with additional beauty of expression. The only sign of age about her was her hair, which during the last two years had become sprinkled with white, and her face scarcely bore a sign of the constant severe suffering which she endured.* Just as with her patients, so now with herself, she had nicknames of her own invention for her different nurses, and not only for them, but for her bottles and dressings, and even for her sponges and towels. Her swollen arm she always called "Sir Roger," sometimes even making jokes about it during the painful moving and adjusting of the cushion underneath it. But sometimes, the melancholy view of her condition seemed suddenly to strike her, and she would say, "Oh, Sister Ellen, *isn't* it a pity that I should be like this?" and then again she would reproach herself, and pray for patience. Her old night-nurse, Mrs. R——, with whom she had passed many happy nights, as she expressed it, in the hospital, seemed to be a great comfort to her when, in her constant fits of extreme depression, she could not realize the presence of her Saviour.

The last time she displayed a vivid interest in

* Sister Dora, in addition to her other complaint, suffered from consolidation of the right lung, probably due to malignant disease of the glands about the root of the lung. This state of things produced a condition similar to phthisis, and accounts for the impeded respiration and distressing cough from which she suffered so severely at the last.

public concerns was on the occasion of the much-lamented death of the Grand-Duchess of Hesse. She desired to have the whole account of the illness, and the course of the disease, described to her, and expressed her deep personal sympathy with the grief of the Queen. To all her friends, and to many of her old patients, she gave, with her own hand, small remembrances of herself: to one a book, to another her thimble, to a third the chains which always hung at her waist, holding scissors, knife, etc. To most of these friends she gave also precious counsels, or words of warning, which will sound in their ears till they, too, lie upon their death-beds.

On Saturday, December the 21st, it became evident that the end was really drawing near, and Mrs. H—— came, determined not to leave her dear mistress until all was over. Sister Dora's depression now seemed greater than before, and a dread, amounting to horror, of the last pangs of death came upon her. She had extracted from the doctor, with some difficulty, his opinion that the end would probably come during one of her fits of coughing. These were now almost incessant, and the thought of death during one of these paroxysms seemed to cause her anxious terror. At times all was loneliness and darkness; but still the faith in which her life had been passed stood her in such good stead that one of her nurses, who had watched many

death-beds, testified, "I *never* saw such faith and patience." Mrs. H—— said to her, "Why, Sister, think how many friends you are going to;" and this idea of a welcome from those souls whom she had herself led to God, comforted her not a little. She repeatedly said, "Oh, I hope I shall sing my Christmas carol in heaven;" but as each day passed, her hope of release before Christmas Day grew fainter. On Monday night the pain became terrible, and early on Tuesday morning, December the 24th, she said, "I am dying; run for Sister Ellen." Meanwhile, Mrs. H—— tried to soothe her, saying, "Our Blessed Lord is standing at the gates of heaven to open them for you." But she no longer needed such consolation, for all her darkness was gone, and she answered, "I see Him there; the gates are opened wide." Mrs. H——'s thoughts (as she afterwards said) turned involuntarily to the little girl dying of her burns, and she wondered if the child would also be at the gates with her bunch of flowers. When all human efforts for her relief had been exhausted, she said, as they stood watching her, "I have lived alone, let me die alone," repeating "let me die alone," till they were forced to leave her, one friend only watching through the half-open door. For some hours she lived on. All pain seemed to have left her; and about two p.m. the anxious watcher only knew, by a slight change of position, that Sister Dora's life was gone.

CHAPTER XI.

FUNERAL: 1878.

"No true crown of honour can be given
Until we place it on a funeral bier."

THE first feeling in Walsall was one of relief that the eleven weeks of pain were over; and as soon as Sister Dora's death was known, the bells of St. Matthew's Church rang a muffled peal, and on every evening during that week the peal was repeated. The door of the house was thronged by people, urgently desiring to be allowed to look their last upon "Sister's" face. But the same answer was given to everybody—that strict orders had been left by herself, that nobody should be admitted to her room after her death, except the doctor and her old friend and servant Mrs. H——, in whose charge, under the lawyer, everything was left. Great was the disappointment of many, whose feeling for their dead friend amounted to a passionate personal attachment; but no one disputed the wisdom of the decision, which was

doubtless designed mainly to save her nurses from needless distress and labour.

A special meeting of the hospital committee was immediately held, at which Sister Dora's lawyer and sole executor explained that she had desired him to arrange that her funeral should be as plainly and quietly conducted as possible, without scarves, hatbands, or trappings of any kind, while it was her strong desire that, if it were possible, she should be carried to her grave by some of the railway servants whom she had nursed. As soon as this wish was made known, eighteen men volunteered to be her bearers.

On Saturday, December the 28th, at two o'clock in the afternoon, a strangely mixed procession accompanied the body of Sister Dora to its last resting-place. Her brother, Mr. Frank Pattison, her executor, representatives of all the church choirs in the city, the physicians and surgeons, the clergy and ministers of all denominations, not only from Walsall, but from the surrounding districts, and from the cathedral city; Bishop John Selwyn, and Bishop Abraham (both personal friends of Sister Dora), the hospital committee, a representative of the member for Walsall, the Mayor and Corporation, the governors of the Grammar School, the Poor-Law Guardians, the School Board, the members of young men's and friendly societies; all anxious to pay a last token of respect and affection, walked

for a mile, through half-melted snow, and occasional drizzling rain. But these formed only a very small part of the procession. It was joined by literally hundreds of old patients, some rushing out of the hospital grounds, where they had been waiting, others joining in the procession on its road, until at length almost the whole population of Walsall seemed to be moving towards the outskirts of the town. There was scarcely a house of which the blinds or the shutters were not closed along the whole of the way to the cemetery, and as carts and waggons stopped to let the silent crowds pass, rough drivers were seen to pull off their caps, and to turn and gaze after the coffin, with tears streaming down their cheeks. Long before the time appointed for the funeral, a dense mass, growing larger and larger as the hour drew nearer, had been quietly collecting in the open space in front of the hospital. As soon as the procession had passed its standing-place, this crowd rushed across the line of railway, taking a short cut to the gate of the cemetery. There it patiently waited for about two hours; the dense crowds accompanying the funeral train, orderly and reverent as they were, rendering progress necessarily very slow.

Those who waited during those two hours in the little cemetery chapel, will not soon forget the sight which met their eyes, as the procession

wound up the path towards them, the coffin so surrounded by the white robes of the large body of clergy and choristers that it was scarcely visible; while, mingled with the sounds of one of Sister Dora's favourite hymns, came the subdued rush and hum of the enormous crowd. A short struggle with the police had ended in complete victory on the part of the people, who justly considered that they had as good a right to be present at the funeral as the representatives of the upper classes. They flocked into the graveyard, pressing round the now uncovered coffin, anxiously gazing at the simple words—"Sister Dora: Entered into rest, 24th December, 1878." Hundreds of the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind, were there; and miserable, ragged women, as well as half-starved children, with the marks of real grief and distress on their faces, had walked long distances to say good-bye to the best friend they had ever known.

By a curious coincidence, and owing probably to the delay caused by the passage of so large a throng of people through the streets, no less than four funerals from the workhouse came up, just before Sister Dora's body arrived at the little chapel. No room was left for her coffin inside the crowded building, and it was therefore placed in the porch, while the service was read over all five at once. "Just as Sister Dora herself

would have wished—not to be divided, even in death, from the poor people she loved so well," remarked one of her nurses who was in the chapel; and in remembrance of her, and for her sake, some of the beautiful flowers intended for her grave, were placed by her friends on the coffins of these unknown paupers. Nothing could be more reverent and orderly than the behaviour of these dense masses, belonging to the lowest grade of society. As the coffin was moved to the grave, and all pressed to follow it, a murmur arose amongst the crowd of, "Hats off," and in a moment every man's head was uncovered. The lady in charge of the hospital, and another nurse, found that a way was at once made for them to the foot of the grave, the people pulling each other aside, saying, "Those are the Sisters; let them pass." As soon as the service was over, these crowds dispersed as quietly as they had collected, many of them first taking a long last look into the open grave.

It is curious, and worth recording, that amongst all the proposed monuments to the memory of Sister Dora, the working members of the population most desire to raise a statue in her honour. They wish her to live, not only in their hearts, where no memorial of her, indeed, is needed; but in the minds, and before the eyes, of their children and children's children. In the recollection of her life among them they feel a pride, which makes them

all ready to echo the words of one of the railway servants, when he was asked why he thought her monument ought to be a statue. "Why, nobody knows better than I do that *we* shan't forget her—no danger of that; but *I* want her to be there, so that when strangers come to the place and see her standing up, they shall ask us, 'Who's that?' and then we shall say, '*Who's that?* Why, that's *our* Sister Dora.'"

The following account, written by a Nonconformist Minister, a friend of Sister Dora, is a valuable testimony to the appreciation in which she was held by those who differed materially from her in religious matters, and it will fitly close this memoir.

"In trying to recall the facts of the fifteen years of our relation with Sister Dora, I am struck with the exceeding dimness of memory in all which concerns the first two or three years of her useful life amongst us. So quietly she came, and so gradually she grew in our esteem, that the steps of the progress are as completely lost as are those of nature, from winter, through spring, into summer, or the growth of day from the darkness of night. There is nothing left of the first im-

pression of her appearance, nothing of her manners, nothing of prejudice any way, and certainly nothing of a prophecy of how great and good she would become, and how deeply we should lament her loss. At the same time, the memory is very vivid as to our great trouble and anxiety about our hospital, and how confused its interests had become, when she dawned upon the scene. Yet, about three years after, at the annual meeting of subscribers, when a gentleman of the committee arose in due form to propose a vote of thanks to Sister Dora, he expressed the feeling of all present by describing her as 'Our Pandora,' unto whom the great God had given all the precious gifts, besides an infinite hope, and 'without the mischiefs.' In fact, at this distance of time one is impressed with how entirely spiritual was her relation to us, from the moment of her advent to the moment she was taken from us. Many times it was remarked amongst us that she had, by her life, elevated that word 'Sister' into a meaning loftier than it ever had before sounded in our experience, though already one of the sweetest and holiest we have in our language; and, as regards religion, it was said at a public meeting, at a time when doubts hung about the minds of many good people, that she had given new evidence of the 'sublime possibilities of Christianity.'

"Perhaps the first element of her character which

made itself felt, and certainly the one of most value to us at the time, was her great hopefulness. This glowed in her, as was said of a great historic character, 'like a pillar of fire;' it did so in the first and darkest hour, and did so every hour unto the end. This light and warmth never paled. It was so healthy, too; not as of 'hope against hope,' but the hope of a sound pure nature doing the work of God. The firm, calm, clear ring of her voice made doubt or despondency impossible in her presence.

"This suggests the fine character of her intellect, mainly as adapted to her especial work and mission —a quality which must always command respect and obedience, especially when crowned by divine principle. She never, to us, appeared to misunderstand or mistake. It was never caught sleeping or taken by surprise. Not even her great tenderness seemed ever to bend her judgment from the truth —neither in opinion nor practice. It is remembered, how one day a committee-man was about to carry a poor wounded fellow from a cart, which had brought him to the hospital, thinking him incapable of self-movement. She, in her prompt and cheery way, said, 'He can walk into the house himself; let him try—let him try.' So true was her intellect, that for the time every one seemed obliged to be true in her presence; hence very few even attempted to deceive her, and those few

scarcely ventured on the experiment a second time. One of the few who did thus venture was an Irishman, and some there are who could almost forgive the poor fellow, considering how strong was the inclination; and of such an opinion seemed Sister Dora herself, who told the anecdote with much humour.

"Having, as she said, retired for the night, feeling very comfortable at the good order she had found, and left all within her charge, and being about to surrender herself to sweet sleep, she suddenly became convinced that she smelt the smoke of tobacco. This was contrary to the rules, besides an attempt to deceive, and a clear act of insubordination, and insufferable. Directed by the offending smell, she made her way to the ward, and, to her surprise, found it in total darkness. To her question as to the cause of this change, Patrick, who lay near the door, readily replied, 'And may it please you, Sister Dora, but it was a butterfly, for it came, you see, buz, buz, whiz, whiz, all about the room, and shure enough, it banged into the flame and out went the light.' 'What a wonderful butterfly!' said the Sister; 'and out so late at night, too. Besides, Patrick, how did it manage to turn off the gas? Oh, you naughty man, you have been trying to deceive.' The light being restored, she put him to that kind of examination which is so terrible to clever offenders: 'Now, Patrick, what have

you got there under the clothes? Let me see.' Then most unwillingly did Pat, as one entirely baffled, and not more than half penitent, draw forth his pipe, still alight—his wife had brought it that afternoon, duly filled, as the most acceptable present she could devise, and manifesting more love to her husband than regard for the rules of the establishment. Then sadly, and with much seeming penitence, surrendering his unlawful pipe, he said, 'Shure, it is nobody that can deceive you, Sister, and it is myself that will never try again.'

"Another night, and very late, a countryman of Pat's was brought to the hospital with his face much cut and bleeding. 'How is this?' she demanded. 'Well, please you, Sister, I was passing along the street, you see, as peaceable as any lamb, when the wall hit me right over the face and nose all in a moment, before I had time to recover myself, you see.' 'Yes, Mike, I see,' she said; 'but answer me this: Was it not the beer that made the wall move so wonderfully?—for the same wall is very quiet and civil to me, as a wall should be, and to thousands besides. But you have been drinking, Mike, and that spoils everything and everybody.' 'And shure you are the lady that is right—the worse luck!' said the culprit; 'and it is meself that knows that there is no keeping anything from you.' Mike was right, within the practical sphere of her mission. Her intellect was of that kind which

gave her supreme command over the class she had daily to contend with. Yet of that power she seemed scarcely conscious, and she seemed rather to rely upon truth and kindness; and hence her shrewdness had a simplicity, openness, and daylight clearness and directness, which took every one off their guard, and gave a charm to her most righteous inquisitions. A working man came to her with an injured eye—injured in his work. She was able to give him almost instant relief. The poor fellow went amongst his fellows full of wonder, not only, as he said, because she had taken something offensive from his eye, but that she was able to tell that he was by trade a bricklayer. It was this evidence of what appeared to him sharpness of intellect that filled his mouth with her praises, which he continued to narrate for some time, and caused a stir amongst his fellows. On asking Sister Dora about this a few days afterwards, she replied, 'Well, was there anything wonderful in that? Anybody could tell, by the state of his dress and the smell of mortar, that he was a bricklayer or something of the kind; besides, it was a piece of brick which I took from his eye. Nothing wonderful in that.' Just so; but others, and of the bricklaying order, did make a wonder of it and things of like shrewdness; and although she never sought power by such means, yet her influence and usefulness owed much thereto.

"This intellectual superiority and force of character was often tried in the earlier days of the hospital. The humanity was rude, full fed, and passionate as an untamed animal, and many a struggle she had with the big fellows impatient and maddened with pain; but she always conquered.

"It was the fineness of her intellect which so tempered her love and kept her whole life at such an even balance between justice and mercy. Many good people are weak and unreasonable in their goodness, and are unhappily disposed to 'twaddle' in talk, and to 'coddle' the poor and afflicted. She was always as healthy as the breath of morning, especially to children, whom she loved, if possible, more than any besides. These she would often nurse and carry about, but would never indulge their mere whims; she could love them without spoiling them. Healthy of soul herself, her every influence tended to the promotion of health in all around, not only of body, but of health of soul also.

"Committees are generally understood to be difficult at times to please and to work with; first, because composed of such different elements, and then, too, because subject to such constant change. The committee of the Cottage Hospital has been no exception to the general rule; rather, in respect of the elements of which it has been formed, the difficulty has been intensified.

"The noble object has moved men of every shade of politics and every form of religious belief to the work, and there have been passages in its history not pleasant to remember; but not one of these in the remotest degree involved Sister Dora. On the contrary, her presence and counsel always brought light and peace, and lifted every question into a higher sphere. 'Ask Sister Dora,' it used to be said. 'Had we not better send for Sister Dora?' some member would exclaim out of the fog of contention. Thereupon she would appear; and many will remember how calmly, self-possessed, and clear-sighted she would stand—never sit down. Indeed, there are those who worked with her fifteen years who never saw her seated; she would stand, usually with her hand on the back of the chair which had been placed for her, every eye directed to her; nor was it ever many moments before she had grasped the whole question, and given her opinion just as clearly, and simply, and straight to the purpose as any opinion given to the sufferers in the wards. Nor was she ever wrong; nor did she ever fail of her purpose with the committee. No committee-man ever questioned or differed from Sister Dora, yet in her was the sublime charm of unconsciousness of power or superiority, and the impression left was, of there being no feeling of pleasure in her, other than the triumph of the right. And what is true of the relation of the

committee as a whole, is true of each individual thereof. There was a freedom, frankness, close straightforwardness in her bearing, such as many never experienced from any lady besides; so much so, that a younger member, whose mind was full at the time of Greek poetry, said that the way she stood and looked you full in the face reminded him of a Greek goddess, such as Athena, in her instructions to Ulysses.

"Perhaps the breadth and soundness of her sympathy, which seemed a measureless possibility of her nature, might be taken as another secret, not only of power over human nature, but also of the fineness of her intellect. When she inquired after your health, or other little incidents of your history, it always came with the feeling of entire sincerity; the questions were pertinent and discriminative, and with the whole force of her being; she seemed wholly with you at the time, and would do you all the good she could. She once, in her sudden, hearty manner, surprised a gentleman of the committee by saying, looking him full in the face, 'You have been smoking;' but it was said with so much sympathy, goodness, and pleasantness, that there was no more irritation in the challenge than would be if the sun shone out suddenly and made manifest to a wise man the fact that his coat was not so respectable as he had thought. She equally surprised a member, by telling him she had

heard that he was seen riding through a village, a little distance away, on a bicycle. The impression made was not that of reprobation, but rather of intense sympathy; it might, indeed, be with the weakness as well as the dangers or freedom of the foible. Indeed, all the ways of human kind seemed interesting to her, and she loved to observe them.

"The only horse-race the writer ever saw was in her company. It was from the hospital upper windows. It so happened, that the committee had been summoned for the afternoon of these Walsall races, but only the writer and the venerable Vicar, then Mr. Sharwood, were present; and as no business could be done, we stood at the window with Sister Dora, and saw the running of some of the horses—and more, saw one of the riders thrown, who was quickly brought to the hospital, but not before preparation had been made for him. She joined the spectators one fine summer evening to watch the evolutions of a sailor in the lake of the Arboretum, who exhibited in a floating suit of india-rubber. She also gave great satisfaction in being present at the last Science and Art *soirée*, and in the interest she showed in the objects exhibited and the lectures delivered; so that it might be said of her, or rather she might have said for herself, as is recorded of Divine Wisdom of old, amongst other things, 'And my delights were with the sons of men.'

"Thus it was that her nature and life were so

essentially Christian: first by the clearness and force by which she discerned and grasped divine truth on its spiritual and eternal side, and which simplified and unified her whole being in its central force, and then her unutterable love for her fellow-beings. Thus her religion was as natural to her, and appropriate, and fresh, and pleasing to all, as the perfume or particular colour of the individual flower is to its kind. It was not dogmatic, controversial, old or new, or denominational. It was delightful to be within its influence, but was as impossible to describe as the charms of the flowers aforesaid; only it elevated the observer into a higher sphere, and this, no matter how remotely the conversation commenced, or with what introduction of pleasantry.

"It was known how well, too, she loved her Church; but no Nonconformist ever thought about the difference, in the charm of her conversation. She seemed to have anticipated that larger fold, whose platform is as wide as spirit itself; that city, in which no visible temple could be discerned, and for which most earnest souls are praying. Her liberality was extraordinary. Thus, she quite disagreed with some severe remarks made by the committee to a patient who refused, according to the rules of the institution, to return thanks publicly for his recovery. The man urged conscientious objections, and she allowed the plea.

"But this fine intellect, this noble heart, this saintly spirit, this highest type of Christian, has suddenly been withdrawn. Her sun has gone down whilst it is yet day. Does the law of natural selection rule with the same imperial force in the invisible world as it is said to do here? Has that realm of infinite perfection by necessity drawn the most like to itself? We know not; we can only wonder and mourn. Yes, we can do one thing more—we can treasure her memory; and therein it may be that her ministry for good may last with us until time shall end. At present, we have to add much faith to as much reason as we can get, and in the experience of many we are surrounded by shadows; but even the shadows may be to us now, as they were to the saints of Apostolic teaching, 'shadows of good things to come.' It is for us, then, to so observe the shadows, as to anticipate what is that more perfect 'image' it is in the heart of the great Father to make known to us.

"And surely the most desirable image to us, is that of the most perfect human soul, and quite as surely, that image has dwelt and worked amongst us in Walsall for fifteen years. That has been our extraordinary privilege. Not only do we treasure her memory, as that of a great and useful worker in the cause of suffering humanity, but for the higher reason, that we have had in her

a style of character more sublime than any we had seen before, or in these days, perhaps, hardly thought possible. For whilst we are ready to admit, how specially she was equipped for the kind of work she undertook, yet we have all felt how complete was her character on every side, and it is impossible to say how great she might have been in other circles of activity.

"Should we be tempted some day to despond of humanity, we will think of her; should we be shaken some dark hour concerning the possibilities of Christianity, her image will reassure us; should we be told, amid scenes of perplexity, that 'religion is a disease;' then we can point to her, as to one who possessed, at all times, a fulness of joyous life beyond all we had ever known."

THE END.

PRINTED AT THE CAXTON PRESS, BECCLES.